

# Arts and Cultural Development Plan

for the South West region of NSW

2018 - 2021



SOUTH WEST  
**ARTS**



*We acknowledge that we live and work on  
Aboriginal land and we pay our respects  
to Elders past and present.*



## Arts and Culture Vision

The South West Arts vision is for **an enthusiastic region of empowered communities, with vibrant cultural identities and sustainable creative opportunities.**

## Mission

South West Arts seeks to support arts and cultural development by:

- Developing and promoting contemporary local cultural expression in its many forms
- Advocating the benefits of art and culture for the South West region of New South Wales
- Supporting the growth of a culture of innovation and creativity
- Facilitating connection through arts and cultural development
- Encouraging the sustainability of arts and culture organisations
- Ensuring South West Arts is managed in a sound and financially responsible manner



## Our Plan

...is new, dynamic and resolute. It is aimed at building social and economic capacity through arts and culture development and is based on the shared ideals and desires of the communities of the South West of NSW.

This plan recognises the diversity of the region, its people and its landscapes while recognising our shared sense of place, desires to define and express who we are, to be heard and respected and to build an innovative and exciting future for the region's young people.

## Our Role

South West Arts (SWA) was formed in 1983 and was one of the first Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs) established in NSW. Today, the organisation forms part of a network of 14 Regional Arts Development Organisations, each providing strategic direction for sustainable Arts and Cultural development in their respective regions.

South West Arts is an important partnership between Create NSW, Regional Arts NSW and the six Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Balranald, Berrigan, Carrathool, Edward River, Hay and Murray River. The organisation is an incorporated, not for profit, independent organisation that is governed by a volunteer, skills-based board.

## Building our Plan

The need for the development of this Strategic Plan became more and more of an imperative as our consultation and engagement process progressed across the region. While the region is facing a number of challenges, the communities are optimistic about the opportunities for their future, with Arts and Culture development important contributors to that optimism. This Plan gives voice to the concerns, highlights the needs and gives strength to the creativity that exists throughout the region.

This document is a plan for the South West Arts region, not just for our organisation and has been formulated using a variety of methodologies over an 18-month period.

Our preliminary ideas for this plan were formulated by the community within the Edward River LGA. For six months between December 2016 and May 2017, Regional Development Australia Murray, facilitated a series of workshops with a project team to define the *Nature and Direction of the Regional Art and Culture Ecosystem in the Plains of Southern NSW and Northern Victoria*.

This would provide the context to develop a:

- Background Paper on the issues and opportunities affecting Arts and Cultural development in the region
- Research and analysis of state, national and international best practice
- Consultations about specific needs, challenges and ideas for the future with: artists; Councils; arts, cultural and community organisations; young people; and the indigenous community

A strong theme has run throughout this process: that the communities of the South West are passionate about where they live, they have a strong connection to place and want the opportunity, through cultural development, to make where they live sustainable, socially aware and vibrant.

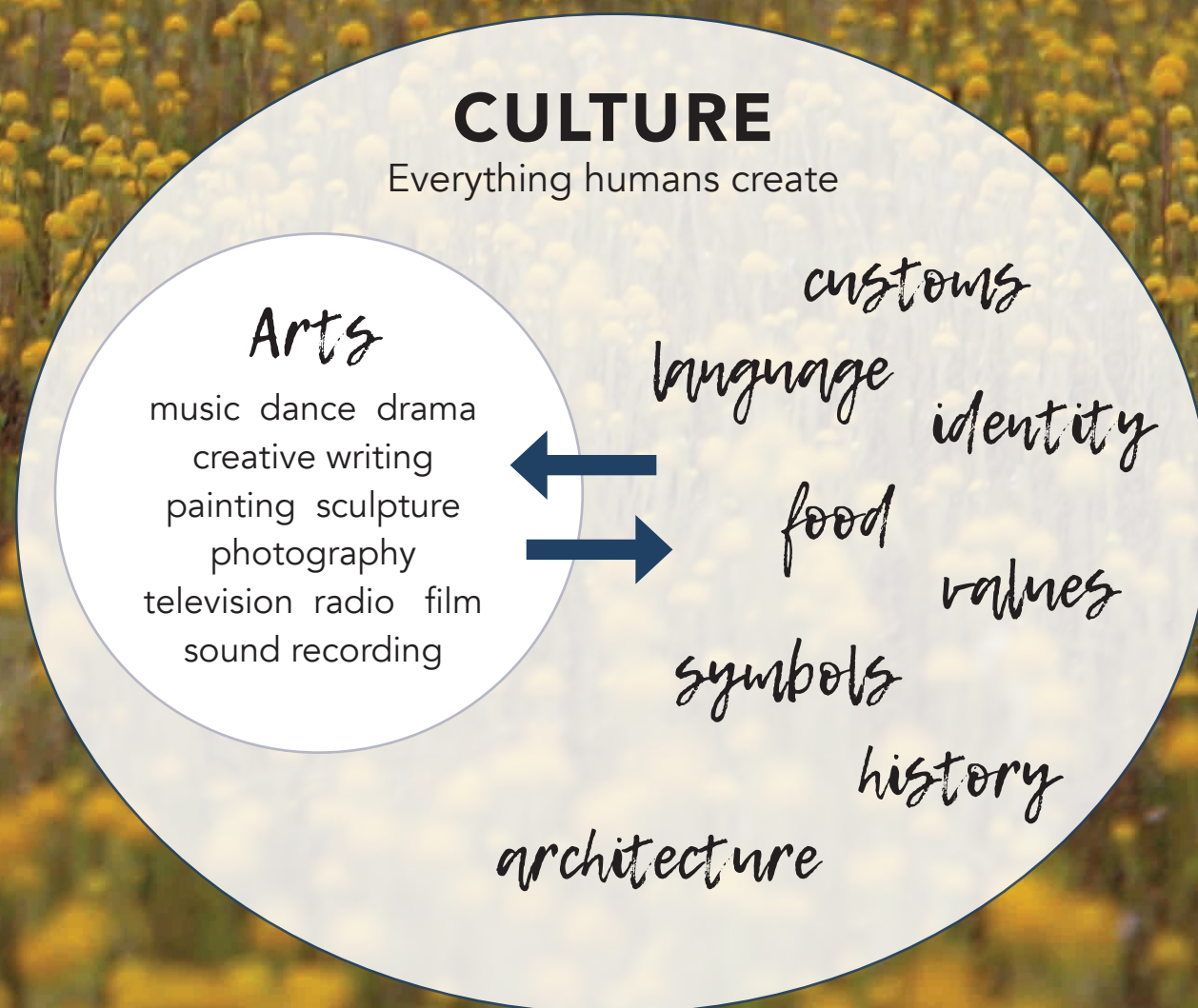


## What is Arts and Culture?

CULTURE is everything that humans create and includes our values, goals, practices and shared attitudes that define who we are as a society and the elements that characterise our particular way of life.

The ARTS are a part of culture and are composed of many creative disciplines such as visual arts, literary arts and the performing arts.

Together, ARTS AND CULTURE preserve our heritage and define our identity in today's world.



## Why is Arts and Culture important?

When we talk about the value of arts and culture throughout the region, the most immediate response is always about its social and emotional value, particularly to women. However what is not generally understood is that arts and culture have a wider, more measurable impact on our economy, health and wellbeing, society and education.

- By 2020 creativity will become one of the top 3 skills workers will need<sup>i</sup>
- NSW creative industries are forecast to grow at an annual average rate of 3.1% to 2020 - compared to 2.7% per annum for the NSW economy overall. The creative industries now lead the UK economy.<sup>ii</sup>
- Art practices have been found to be a key factor in health and wellbeing and are associated with improved morbidity and mortality<sup>iii</sup>
- In 2016 NSW hosted over 12.3 million culture and heritage visitors who spent an estimated \$12 billion in the State. A 50% increase from 2012<sup>iv</sup>

There is an opportunity to work collaboratively to develop our understanding of how much our cultural life contributes to the health of the communities across the region, of the economic contribution arts and culture make to our communities and of the impact arts and culture have on driving innovation and new thinking.

Creative industries in particular offer an opportunity for renewing engagement of our youth to build rounded communities that meet the needs of future generations.



# Understanding our Region

South West Arts covers a geographic area of approximately 78,000 square kilometres and has a population of over 38,000 people. Deniliquin is the largest population centre in the region and is the community in which the South West Arts office is currently located.

Key economic sectors in the region rely heavily on agricultural and pastoral industries such as rice, cotton, wheat, sheep, dairy and horticulture. Creative industries are growing, with architectural and design firms having offices based in the region. There are a growing number of graphic designers and web developers, as well as local companies specialising in software and app development for agriculture, education and business.

The region prides itself on being a resilient rural community, but does not identify as being particularly artistic or cultural. This is due in part to Arts and Cultural development, and to a lesser extent community development, not being strategic priorities for the majority of LGAs in the region. Despite this, Local Government is the main contributor to the development and maintenance of cultural infrastructure.

Funding is provided via State and Local governments to support the operational costs of regionally based organisations such as South West Music Regional Conservatorium (SWMRC), Outback Theatre for Young People (OTYP) and South West Arts (SWA). The total combined value of annual Arts and Cultural government funding is less than \$450,000 for the entire South West Region. There are just 8 full time equivalent dedicated arts workers to support the entire region, 4 of which are dedicated music teachers. No LGAs in the region fund dedicated arts, cultural, or youth positions within their structures.

Opportunities for participation in Arts and Culture are provided throughout the region by a collective of grass roots community run organisations, individual professional artists and small businesses that are diverse in size, approach and forms of delivery. Together they have created a kaleidoscope of cultural assets, skills and shared values that contribute to the social capital, wellbeing, pride and economic prosperity of the region.

A significant feature of the region is that the vast majority of Arts and Cultural initiatives and activities are initiated and managed by volunteers. All project and program funding is subject to competitive grants processes, fundraising, local sponsorship or donations.

**VISUAL ARTS** The region is home to a number of professional visual artists and a small but prolific community of sculptors and muralists. There are very active amateur visual arts groups with some supporting volunteer run galleries (in Echuca-Moama, Balranald, Moulamein and Hillston). These groups hold regular classes, exhibitions, pop-up shops and art prizes. There are currently no facilities within the region with the required infrastructure - such as climate control, floorspace, capacity or professional curation - to house most touring exhibitions.

The region is known for wool and cotton production and has resulted in a range of craft and textile groups as well as fibre artists, professional commercial textile designers and small businesses.

**PERFORMING ARTS** The region is home to the highly successful Outback Theatre for Young People, which delivers a range of youth theatre and performance programs. Most theatre in the region is created by the amateur dramatic societies in Barham (Golden Rivers Theatre Group), Berrigan (Berrigan Amateur Dramatic Society), Finley (Finley Amateur Dramatic and Musical Society) and Echuca-Moama (Echuca Moama Theatre Company). A new theatre company is currently being established in Deniliquin.

The region does not have any dedicated theatre or performance spaces, so presenting theatre can be challenging and there are limited professional touring performances presented in the region as a consequence.

**MUSIC** South West Music Regional Conservatorium is based in Deniliquin and delivers music education, mostly to young people, across the region. They are able to regularly teach in remote and isolated communities via video conferencing. The Conservatorium presents a concert series across the region each year, funding professional classical and contemporary musicians to perform locally. There is a growing calendar of live music events featuring amateur bands alongside professional touring artists.

There is an enthusiastic amateur music community, with local choirs, bands and ukulele groups in many towns. There are regular live music events, such as open-mic nights, music in pubs and clubs and the Deniliquin UKE Muster (an annual ukulele conference and workshop). The region is also home to a small number of musicians who have active careers in music performance. There are limited opportunities for studio recording and mastering in the region, and no dedicated live music venues.

**FESTIVALS** A range of successful festivals highlight and profile arts and culture across the region and bring thousands of visitors to the region each year. Notable festivals include the Deni Ute Muster (Deniliquin), Riverboats Festival and the Winter Blues Festival (Echuca-Moama), Strawberry Fields Festival (Tocumwal), Confest (Moulamein) as well as smaller annual festivals in Balranald, Rankin Springs, Deniliquin and Hay.

# Key creative communities

There are varying and diverse communities within the South West region; not only in terms of those who are linguistically diverse but also in terms of cultural, religious and gender diversity.

The communities below have been identified as ones that will receive the most benefit from Arts and Cultural development initiatives over the coming years.

**INDIGENOUS** At the time of the 2016 census, 3 LGAs in the region had percentages of the population above the State average (5.5% in NSW outside Greater Sydney) that identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander - Balranald (8.7%), Carrathool (8%) and Hay (6%). The other three LGAs in the region had a combined percentage of 3.2%.<sup>1</sup> Due to the large geographical nature of the region, the Aboriginal population distribution is widespread.

**WOMEN** There have been several notable studies regarding improving Women's health and wellbeing in relation to art and health. Notable highlights being the Stockport (UK) "arts on prescription" service which offered artistic and music programs for women with postnatal depression or those at risk of developing it.<sup>2</sup>

When arts programs were introduced to women who experience depression or anxiety, statistically significant decreases in depression and anxiety were observed among participants, using visual analog scales as a measure.<sup>3</sup>

**YOUTH** A combined Sydney University and Australian Council for the Arts study has cemented the long-held belief that engagement in the arts benefits youth academically as well as with general life skills.<sup>4</sup> This study found that active participation in the arts, as opposed to being an observer or audience member, yielded stronger positive results with regard to school and personal wellbeing outcomes such as an increase in educational aspirations, self-esteem, life satisfaction and a sense of meaning or purpose.

In an additional study published by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2012 found that one of the most impressive results from immersion in the arts among youth is extracurricular<sup>5</sup> - that is despite socio-economic status, youth in High Schools with arts-rich histories were significantly more likely to participate in community and extracurricular activities.

**CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE** In recent research conducted by the Australia Council for the Arts, the percentage of Non-English speaking persons in the workforce is 16%, with 8% of those non-English-speaking persons being classified as 'Professional Artists'.<sup>6</sup> Whilst the majority of these artists hold a positive view of their cultural background and what it brings to their practice, their median income from arts practice is 40% lower than the median income of other artists.<sup>7</sup>

Allowing for a range of voices within arts practices facilitates a more inclusive and diverse culture which encourages a multitude of perspectives, challenges existing cultural structures and generates new ideas. Participation in the arts helps foster a sense of community and inclusion as well as create platforms for facilitation of cross-cultural understanding.

**REMOTE** Remoteness 'means limited types of creative making; wariness of newcomers and new ideas; the loss of young people; limited access to business expertise, production services and training; lack of cultural stimulation; and high transport costs'.<sup>8</sup> The majority of the South West Region is classified as rural or remote.

**SEXUALLY AND GENDER DIVERSE** The Department of Health estimates that around 11% of our population identifies as being sexually and gender diverse (SGD).<sup>9</sup> 20% SGD people aged 16 and over live in inner and outer regional areas, and 0.7% in rural and remote areas.<sup>10</sup>

While sexually or gender diverse Australians live happy, healthy lives, research has found that a large number of SGD people are twice as likely to have symptoms which meet the criteria for a mental health disorder in the last 12 months, as well as more than five times as likely to suicide when compared to peers.<sup>11</sup>

By fostering an inclusive environment, such as spaces which include non-discrimination or anti-bullying policies, we can improve the health of our SGD population.<sup>12</sup>

Suicide is the main cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds in the Riverina.

**DISABILITY** Disability tends to be more common in rural and remote areas than in urban areas. In terms of age profile, the population outside of capital cities is older than in other areas, and this age profile is projected to continue.<sup>13</sup>

Various barriers to creative and receptive arts participation for people with disability include the cost, not enough opportunities close to home, finding the arts more difficult to access, ill-health, and feeling uncomfortable and nervous about trying new things.<sup>14</sup>





# What our community has told us

*'Nobody around here believes in the value of the arts'*

The importance of Arts and Culture in supporting social and economic outcomes is only just beginning to be recognised in the region. Some of the regions LGAs are now starting to prioritise Arts and Cultural development in their strategic plans and budgets.

This shift in perception of the importance of Arts and Culture development is driven by a grass-roots movement which is encouraging Local Government to invest more in dedicated Arts and Culture infrastructure in the region. Some communities are beginning to recognise the importance of developing programs that focus on using Arts and Culture to encourage innovation, diversity and social cohesion, improve health and wellbeing and increase individual and community capacity to change and adapt to adversity.

Several leading communities are beginning to drive change in priority thinking through participation in Community Strategic Planning and through direct engagement with their LGAs. In other communities, LGAs have underestimated the shifting attitudes to Arts and Culture development, audiences and practice in driving economic and social wellbeing.

As the market for cultural tourism grows, centered on the region's heritage and environmental assets such as National Parks and major river systems, recognition of the importance of Arts and Culture infrastructure to support economic development through cultural tourism is now beginning to be understood.

There is an opportunity to attract audiences from large tourism destinations that border the region in Victoria and large regional centres such as Griffith or Wagga Wagga.

The burgeoning Arts and Culture tourism in the region is strengthened by the large music and creative festivals and the growing number of small galleries and museums.

Community events and festivals are a significant part of local Arts and Culture infrastructure. Communities in the region have recently embraced small Arts and Culture festivals, with new events in the calendar such as *Spring in the Springs* (Rankin Springs), *Deni Fest* (Deniliquin), *Make Hay* (Hay) and *Rainbow on the Plains* (Hay).





*'There is a real opportunity to heal the spirit of the nation through art'*

There are several key Indigenous organisations and land councils working in the region, including:

- Hay Aboriginal Corporation Community Working Party
- Nari Nari Tribal Council
- Deniliquin Aboriginal Land Council
- Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre (YIKC), Deniliquin
- Balranald Aboriginal Land Council
- Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd
- Moama Aboriginal Land Council
- Bridge Arts Project Committee Echuca Moama
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- Cummeragunja Aboriginal Lands Council
- Winangakirri Aboriginal Corporation Roto
- Hillston Aboriginal Corporation
- Murrin Bridge Local Aboriginal Lands Council
- Burambabili Gulbali Incorporated
- Wathungary Hatfield Inc.

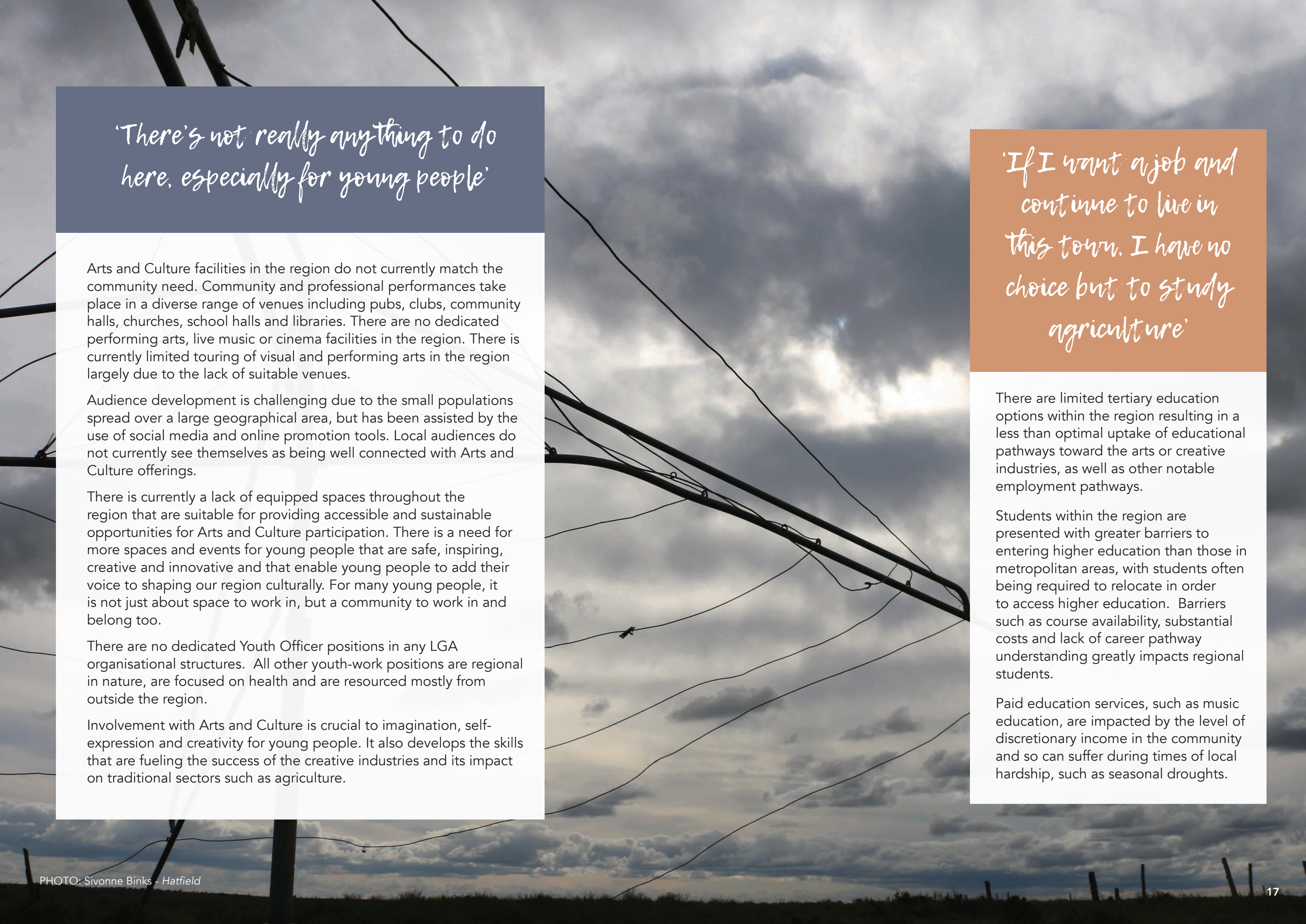
While these local organisations are working with the community to develop a range of infrastructure, culture, language and arts education programs, there is not currently a prominent community of indigenous artists or indigenous cultural and creative industries in the region. Increasing engagement, awareness and visibility of the diversity in the community is an important aspect in social resilience and social cohesion.

*'I'd love to know what other artists are doing in the region'*

Strategic partnerships between organisations, to increase the effectiveness and reach of initiatives, are seen as critical to creating economies in resourcing; incubating new ideas and methods of working; as well as sharing skills, expertise and knowledge.

Supporting the collaboration between regional artists, thinkers, makers and cultural organisations is important in re-imagining our region, retelling our stories and reinvigorating our communities.





*'There's not really anything to do here, especially for young people'*

Arts and Culture facilities in the region do not currently match the community need. Community and professional performances take place in a diverse range of venues including pubs, clubs, community halls, churches, school halls and libraries. There are no dedicated performing arts, live music or cinema facilities in the region. There is currently limited touring of visual and performing arts in the region largely due to the lack of suitable venues.

Audience development is challenging due to the small populations spread over a large geographical area, but has been assisted by the use of social media and online promotion tools. Local audiences do not currently see themselves as being well connected with Arts and Culture offerings.

There is currently a lack of equipped spaces throughout the region that are suitable for providing accessible and sustainable opportunities for Arts and Culture participation. There is a need for more spaces and events for young people that are safe, inspiring, creative and innovative and that enable young people to add their voice to shaping our region culturally. For many young people, it is not just about space to work in, but a community to work in and belong too.

There are no dedicated Youth Officer positions in any LGA organisational structures. All other youth-work positions are regional in nature, are focused on health and are resourced mostly from outside the region.

Involvement with Arts and Culture is crucial to imagination, self-expression and creativity for young people. It also develops the skills that are fueling the success of the creative industries and its impact on traditional sectors such as agriculture.

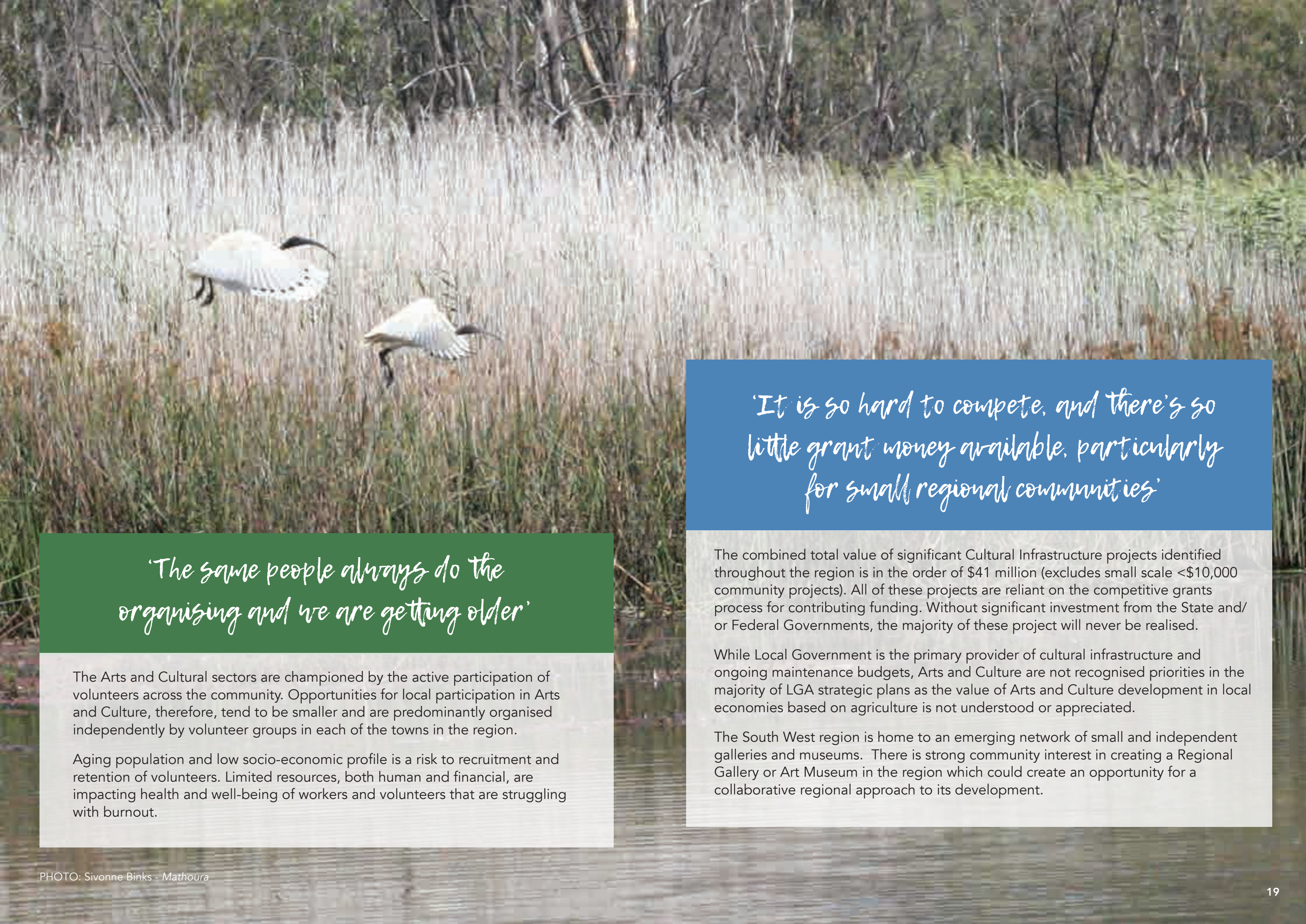
*'If I want a job and continue to live in this town, I have no choice but to study agriculture'*

There are limited tertiary education options within the region resulting in a less than optimal uptake of educational pathways toward the arts or creative industries, as well as other notable employment pathways.

Students within the region are presented with greater barriers to entering higher education than those in metropolitan areas, with students often being required to relocate in order to access higher education. Barriers such as course availability, substantial costs and lack of career pathway understanding greatly impacts regional students.

Paid education services, such as music education, are impacted by the level of discretionary income in the community and so can suffer during times of local hardship, such as seasonal droughts.





*'The same people always do the organising and we are getting older'*

The Arts and Cultural sectors are championed by the active participation of volunteers across the community. Opportunities for local participation in Arts and Culture, therefore, tend to be smaller and are predominantly organised independently by volunteer groups in each of the towns in the region.

Aging population and low socio-economic profile is a risk to recruitment and retention of volunteers. Limited resources, both human and financial, are impacting health and well-being of workers and volunteers that are struggling with burnout.

*'It is so hard to compete, and there's so little grant money available, particularly for small regional communities'*

The combined total value of significant Cultural Infrastructure projects identified throughout the region is in the order of \$41 million (excludes small scale <\$10,000 community projects). All of these projects are reliant on the competitive grants process for contributing funding. Without significant investment from the State and/or Federal Governments, the majority of these project will never be realised.

While Local Government is the primary provider of cultural infrastructure and ongoing maintenance budgets, Arts and Culture are not recognised priorities in the majority of LGA strategic plans as the value of Arts and Culture development in local economies based on agriculture is not understood or appreciated.

The South West region is home to an emerging network of small and independent galleries and museums. There is strong community interest in creating a Regional Gallery or Art Museum in the region which could create an opportunity for a collaborative regional approach to its development.





# Strategic goals

The goals have not been developed for South West Arts as an organisation alone, but for the entire South West Region of NSW. They have been formulated based on the key ideas, needs and priorities identified and shared throughout the consultative process for the development of this plan.

The goals are both aspirational and purposeful and a statement of what the communities of this region want in their future.

The ideas and priorities that the communities of the South West have told us have confirmed our direction and what is needed to be achieved with regard to the four key pillars of:

- Skill and education pathways
- Participation and community wellbeing
- Cultural assets
- Economic opportunities



# GOAL 1: Develop a creative culture

By **Developing a Creative Culture** we will encourage a focus on how the region can be strengthened.

This goal provides the foundation for a shared vision for regional Arts and Cultural development; an understanding of the importance of Arts and Culture to community and economic development, and greater opportunity for regional collaboration and partnerships.

*Encouraging development  
through arts and culture*

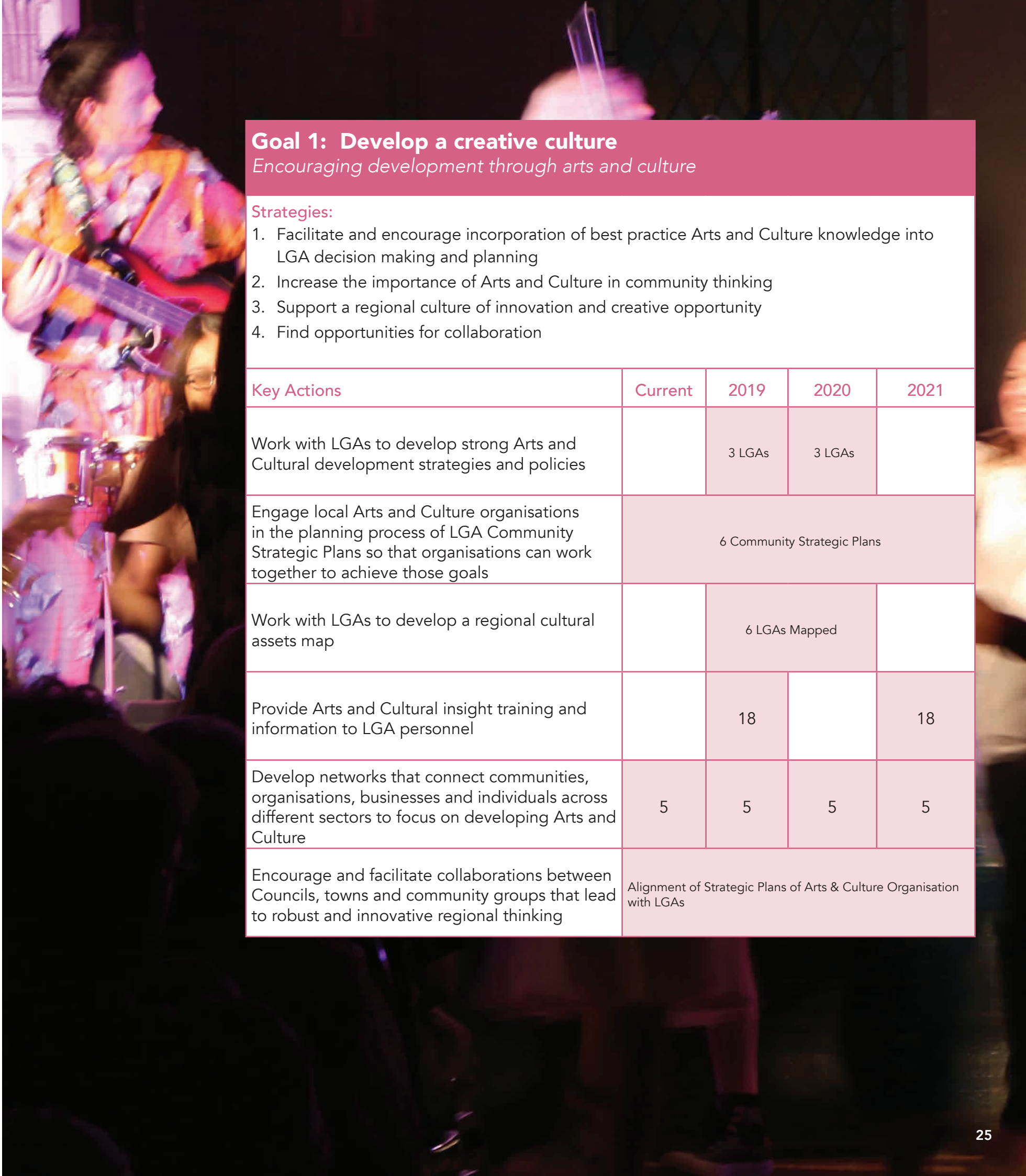
## **STRATEGY 1 - Facilitate and encourage incorporation of best practice Arts and Culture knowledge into LGA decision making and planning**

South West Arts is committed to continue working with LGAs to develop strong arts and cultural development strategies. There has been a noticeable shift in thinking, from seeing arts and culture as a luxury, hobby or pastime, to recognition that it can be used as a tool for Community and Economic Development. Further education and training can continue to equip LGA decision makers to better consider arts and culture in aspects of planning and projects.

## **STRATEGY 2 - Increase the importance of Arts and Culture in community thinking**

In every community there are cultural factors that contribute to the vitality and robustness of the people living there. Arts and Culture can be beneficial across the community, in social and economic areas, at an individual, community and broader society level. Across the region, community groups and local businesses drive a significant amount of local economic and social outcomes. By connecting Arts and Culture into community thinking, we can support and encourage greater creativity and innovation across industry, business and social groups.





**STRATEGY 3 - Support a regional culture of innovation and creative opportunity**

*The arts have the potential to bridge our worlds, harness the wisdom of our different views, engage our imagination to explore new ways of thinking, and create experiences that can be shared by all people in our community.*<sup>15</sup>

Currently, LGAs and local communities are independently developing their creative cultures with different rates of success. There is opportunity to develop a strategic approach to arts, culture and innovation throughout the region that supports the entire community.

A shared narrative in the region, around an Arts and Cultural identity, could capitalise on the similarity of challenges and opportunities across the region, building awareness, participation and ownership.

**STRATEGY 4 - Find opportunities for collaboration**

The extent of collaboration will impact the viability and sustainability of opportunities to participate in Arts and Culture. Collaboration, historically, has been an under-utilised practice across the region. Opportunities for participation tend to be smaller and are predominantly organised independently by groups in each of the towns in the region. Current providers are challenged by infrastructure, human and financial resources. The Arts and Culture community have an opportunity to work together to make the most of its intellectual capital and resources.

South West Arts has identified the strategic potential to drive collaborations between organisations, governments, not for profit organisations, business and various service agencies and sees its role as identifying and connecting opportunities for collaboration, across industries and communities.

The issues of Arts and Cultural development are not unique to our region and do not stop at our LGA borders. South West Arts will be looking for opportunities where collaborating with our neighbouring RADOs, Victorian LGAs and other development organisations will provide benefits to our community.

**Goal 1: Develop a creative culture**  
*Encouraging development through arts and culture*

- Strategies:**
- 1. Facilitate and encourage incorporation of best practice Arts and Culture knowledge into LGA decision making and planning
  - 2. Increase the importance of Arts and Culture in community thinking
  - 3. Support a regional culture of innovation and creative opportunity
  - 4. Find opportunities for collaboration

Key Actions	Current	2019	2020	2021
Work with LGAs to develop strong Arts and Cultural development strategies and policies		3 LGAs	3 LGAs	
Engage local Arts and Culture organisations in the planning process of LGA Community Strategic Plans so that organisations can work together to achieve those goals	6 Community Strategic Plans			
Work with LGAs to develop a regional cultural assets map		6 LGAs Mapped		
Provide Arts and Cultural insight training and information to LGA personnel		18		18
Develop networks that connect communities, organisations, businesses and individuals across different sectors to focus on developing Arts and Culture	5	5	5	5
Encourage and facilitate collaborations between Councils, towns and community groups that lead to robust and innovative regional thinking	Alignment of Strategic Plans of Arts & Culture Organisation with LGAs			



# GOAL 2: Creatively celebrate our culture

**Creative celebration of our culture** will ensure the continued acknowledgment of our cultural heritage and its role in shaping our identity as a region while allowing our diversity as individuals, as organisations, as communities to shape and strengthen our future leadership.

PHOTO: Sivonne Binks - Multicultural Food Markets

*Increasing celebration of cultural diversity, heritage and identity*

## **STRATEGY 1 - Connect Arts and Culture elements to existing celebrations and activities**

*'Community celebrations and festivals allow for a strong connection to the hosting community, generating a sense of pride and ownership and often celebrating a theme that has developed from within the community itself.'*<sup>16</sup>

There are many opportunities to incorporate aspects of cultural diversity, history and identity into existing celebrations to extend their impact.

Celebrations and festivals allow members of rural and regional communities to engage socially, enjoy various forms of entertainment and establish stronger social networks which enhances community cohesion and wellbeing.

In addition to this, celebrations within communities often increase the profile of smaller communities and provide good opportunities to drive tourist visitation.

Cultural tourism is also an important part of the regional tourism portfolio. Between 1999-2003, the most popular cultural activity for international, domestic overnight and domestic day tourists was visiting historical or heritage building sites or monuments.<sup>17</sup>

Tourism is a significant focus of our region's economic development and marketing strategies. There is a growing demand for participation in Art and Culture within and beyond the region - this is reflected through tourism statistics nationally and internationally.<sup>18</sup> Capturing this market and increasing visitation will improve the health of local economies and provide opportunities for new business development.



**STRATEGY 2 - Encourage and facilitate the development of programs, projects and competitions that tell local stories**

The geography of the region creates the opportunity for diverse experiences, understandings, arts and cultures. What is shared is a strong connection to place, with much of the community living and working on the land. Throughout our consultations, the need for telling and sharing local experiences was repeatedly voiced as a way of bringing the community together.

**STRATEGY 3 - Support local Indigenous arts and culture**

Indigenous artists are primary contributors to rich regional cultures.<sup>19</sup> There are ten traditional owner groups across the South West Arts region: Yorta Yorta, Wemba Wemba, Muti Muti, Baraba Baraba, Wadi Wadi, Nari Nari, Madi Madi, Yitha Yitha, Wiradjuri and Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people.

While there are many creative Indigenous people in the region, there is not currently a prominent community of Indigenous artists or Indigenous cultural and creative industries.

Developing Indigenous Arts and Culture can help to support broader social and economic outcomes. Creating a thriving creative community and industry will require a long-term dedicated approach across the region, focusing on collaboration and connection. South West Arts sees that it can play a vital role in supporting the cultural aspirations of the Indigenous peoples of the region.

The region is home to significant cultural heritage and protected sites including Mungo World heritage area; Mawonga Indigenous protection area; the Werai and Millewa Forests and wetlands; Yanga National Park; the Lowbidgee Floodplain and the Koondrook, Gunbower and Barmah forests along the Victorian border.





STRATEGY 4 - Focus on diversity to build strong communities

“A source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature”<sup>20</sup>

Diversity is an important aspect in social resilience and social cohesion. Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. It is the product of thousands of years of history, the fruit of the collective contribution of all peoples through their languages, imaginations, technologies, practices and creations.

Cultural diversity is “a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence”<sup>21</sup>, and is one of the essential elements in the transformation of urban and social reality.

Arts and Culture can build community capacity to cope with change, difference and embracing diversity.

Goal 2: Develop a creative culture

Encouraging development through arts and culture

Strategies:

- 1. Connect Arts and Culture elements to existing celebrations and activities
- 2. Encourage and facilitate the development of programs, projects and competitions that tell local stories
- 3. Support local Indigenous Arts and Culture
- 4. Focus on diversity to build strong communities

Key Actions	Current	2019	2020	2021
Share information on the benefits of Arts and Culture to cultural diversity, heritage and identity		6		6
Expand Arts and Cultural elements within existing events and celebrations	5	5	5	5
Promote Arts and Culture events and activities	2	2	3	3
Grow the Safe Space program, in partnership with ACON, across the region	DENILQUIN	HAY	BALRANALD	MOAMA
Provide promotional support and regional coordination to regional projects, programs and competitions	2	2	2	2
Facilitate cross-sector discussions	2	1	1	1
Actively encourage LGAs to acknowledge traditional owners during formal activities	6 Councils			
Support Indigenous cultural projects and programs	1	2	2	2



# GOAL 3: Make more opportunities to create

**Making more opportunities to create** will not only enable greater participation in Arts and Cultural activities, but will enhance the scope for increased investment in Arts and Culture infrastructure to underpin and grow local social and economic outcomes.

## *Improving participation in local arts and culture*

### **STRATEGY 1 - Support the utilisation of existing and creation of new infrastructure for Arts and Culture**

There is strong demand across the region for dedicated facilities for Arts and Culture. South West Arts can play a role in guiding planning and supporting funding applications for the development of new spaces. There are also opportunities to develop programs that utilise existing unused buildings, shopfronts and public spaces for art and creative industry incubation and development, or to support the development of dedicated Arts and Culture spaces within existing organisations.

There is currently a lack of spaces throughout the region which are suitable for providing accessible and sustainable opportunities for creative participation:

- Spaces which are currently usable are either used on a temporary basis or require significant resources to upgrade and maintain at a functional level
- There are limited music performance venues and a lack of recording spaces
- There are no professional theatre and dance performance or rehearsal spaces available in the region, greatly limiting the professional touring

Although our region is home to several council-run and volunteer led galleries, there is no facility within the region with climate control or the floorspace and capacity to house most touring exhibitions.



STRATEGY 2 - Develop spaces and programs for young people and other user groups to participate in Arts and Culture

Space is an important factor in facilitating environments for creative experiences. Spaces are needed for learning and personal development, creative thinking and expression of individuality.

There is currently a lack of knowledge about the spaces throughout the region which are suitable for providing accessible and sustainable opportunities for creative participation.

There is also a lack of spaces specifically available for young people to explore, innovate and develop their creativity.

Goal 3: Make more opportunities to create  
Improving participation in local arts and culture

- Strategies:
- 1. Support the utilisation of existing and creation of new infrastructure for Arts and Culture
  - 2. Develop spaces and programs for young people and other user groups to participate in Arts and Culture

Key Actions	Current	2019	2020	2021
Develop regional programs that utilise existing unused buildings, shopfronts and public spaces for art and creative industry incubation and development (eg 'pop-up' art exhibitions or performance spaces)	EDWARD RIVER	BERRIGAN HAY	MURRAY RIVER BALRANALD	CARRATHOOL
Support the development of dedicated Arts and Culture spaces within existing organisations	DENILIQVIN		HAY	HILLSTON
Consultations to increase accessible Arts and Culture spaces for young people and other users	FINLEY	DENILIQVIN	MOAMA	
Map Arts and Culture infrastructure available to different groups in each of the areas in the region	30%	50%	80%	6 councils mapped by 2021
Further develop partnerships with government departments and agencies to promote the infrastructure needs within the region		Advocacy Program on identified infrastructure development implemented		
Develop a plan for expanded facilities that incorporate sufficient performance, rehearsal and education spaces to support the growth of Arts and Culture organisations, including SWMRC, YIKC and OTYP		Business Case/Plan developed		
Develop and promote regional Arts and Cultural Trail		Consults with 6 LGAs completed		
Develop a regional collaborative approach to critical cultural infrastructure projects		SWA sub-committee tasked		



## CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Approximately \$41 million worth of potential large scale cultural infrastructure projects (excluding small community projects <\$10,000) have been identified by Councils and communities across the region:

### BALRANALD SHIRE

- Wathungary Hatfield Cultural Healing Centre
- Theatre/Hall upgrades
- Museum redevelopment
- Balranald Gallery Roof, insulation and air-conditioning
- Indigenous Arts and Cultural Centre
- Artist Collective Spaces and business incubator
- Mungo and Yanga National Parks cultural heritage
- Friends of the Southern Cross Museum relocation

### BERRIGAN SHIRE

- Finley Pioneer Railway Arts Precinct and Heritage Arts Walk
- Tocumwal Amphitheatre
- Tocumwal Town Hall
- Tocumwal Foreshore Masterplan
- Berrigan Theatre upgrade
- Berrigan Parks, Town Walk and murals
- Berrigan Skate Park murals
- Tocumwal Aerodrome WW11 Heritage Project
- Finley Arts Centre
- Barooga Town Walk

### CARRATHOOL SHIRE

- Red Dust and Paddy Melon Gallery relocation Hillston
- Indigenous Keeping Place
- Rankin Springs Hall renovations
- “Creative” toilet rest stop Rankin Springs
- Goolgowi Highway roundabout cultural feature
- Hillston Heritage Centre capital works
- Rankin Springs Silo and Town Art Walk
- Cultural Tourist Information Centre
- Goolgowi Heritage Walk
- Hillston Walking Track & Arts Trail

### EDWARD RIVER COUNCIL

- Deniliquin Town Hall refurbishment and performance space
- Peppin Heritage Centre Regional Gallery
- Deni Ute Muster site infrastructure plan
- South West Music Regional Conservatorium relocation
- Indigenous Art Laneway Walk
- Arts and Cultural Precinct
- Creative Common building renovations
- Air Force Training School Museum
- Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Cultural Heritage Centre
- Deniliquin town entrances
- Small Village public art

### MURRAY RIVER COUNCIL

- Bridge Arts Project
- Moulamein Gallery extension
- Shire Arts and Cultural Trail
- Moulamein Tourism Heritage Village
- Barham Theatre redevelopment
- Public art and murals (including skate parks)
- Tooleybuc Keepers Cottage
- Moama Community Arts and Cultural space
- Mathoura Timber Heritage Project
- Riverside Park Events Space Barham
- Moama Botanic Gardens and Play Park Infrastructure Development
- Moama Soundshell event space upgrade
- Moama Creative Business Incubator and studio spaces
- Signage
- Public art

### HAY SHIRE

- Public Art Trail
- 5 Museums (multiple works)
- Shear Outback Conference Venue
- Showground Infrastructure for festivals and events
- Cobb Highway Roundabout cultural feature
- Meandering Maude Walking Trail and Sculpture Walk
- Maude Heritage signage
- Lowbidgee Floodplain





# GOAL 4: **Grow** our creative community

**Growing our creative community** will ensure individual artists, makers and creative thinkers are supported and given opportunities to learn, develop their businesses and feel empowered to create.

## *Supporting artists and creative industries*

### **STRATEGY 1 - Increase the profile of local artists, creative industries and cultural tourism programs**

Celebrating the rich and varied creative industries that currently exist in our region, while exploring avenues to increase presence and awareness of their impact is important to the economic sustainability of the region.<sup>22</sup>

Creative industries are a rapidly growing sector of the economy. They are expected to grow at a faster rate than the rest of the NSW economy over the next 10 years. According to Access Economics the NSW creative industries are forecast to grow at an annual average rate of 3.1% to 2020, compared to 2.7% per annum for the NSW economy overall.<sup>23</sup>

The health of the local economy is dependent on innovation - we need innovation to support our dominant commodity driven economy to shift to a more value-add economy. By connecting creative industries into the commercial economy, we can support and encourage innovation and attract more young professionals to the region.

The creative industries, through the use of technology, are leading changes in a number of industry sectors. There is a major opportunity for creative industries to support businesses throughout the region in business innovation.

Opportunities to support local creative industries include education and training, establishing professional networking opportunities, creating incentives and awards, business incubators and small business programs.



**STRATEGY 2 - Support and develop spaces and programs that enable the establishment and growth of creative businesses and enterprises**

There are multiple spaces for creative practice, however they have the following limitations:

- Most spaces are temporary
- Most of the spaces that exist require significant resources to upgrade and maintain at a functionable level
- There is a shortage of performance venues
- There are no professional theatre and dance performance or rehearsal spaces
- Facilities, such as SWMRC, are reaching capacity
- None of the music service providers have sound recording spaces
- There is no gallery in the region with climate control or the capability to house most touring exhibitions
- There is limited multimedia capability across the region
- There are limited youth Arts and Culture spaces
- There is a shortage of affordable spaces that provide opportunities for business incubation, creative enterprise and new industry development.

The region is on the state border of New South Wales and Victoria and is reliant on both for service provision. It has a small population, lacks a large regional centre and is in a historically safe conservative seat, so can be overlooked in NSW Government funding and policy priorities. For these and other reasons the population does not have a strong history of political engagement.

The Southern part of the region is reliant on Victoria for services, while directed by NSW Government policy. This impacts the capacity of decision-makers to make informed decisions about the region and can impact the social and economic outcomes in the region.

The region requires a coordinated approach to advocate for the Arts and Culture requirements of the region.

*'...cultural activities and assets - including those of specific sectors such as visual arts, music and film - are increasingly significant to local communities, to the economic performance of cities, and to the export potential of nations.*

*Such activities can propel the knowledge-based economy and the shift from manufacturing and the rural economy to the services sector more generally. Estimates vary, but certainly the creative and cultural industries account for somewhere between four and eight percent of the national GDP of Australia and up to 25 percent of the workforce of cities like Sydney.'* <sup>24</sup>



STRATEGY 3 - Provide opportunities to connect people with creative industry career, education and training pathways

Quality education is important in increasing pathways for business development, employment and careers and for inspiring new and different ways of thinking, working and doing business. Tertiary education options are extremely limited in the region generally. Tertiary education options for arts, culture and creative industries are virtually nonexistent.

There are opportunities to work with industry and education providers to develop local access to secondary and tertiary education pathways.

Goal 4: Grow our creative community <i>Supporting artists and creative industries</i>				
<b>Strategies:</b> 1. Increase the profile of local artists, creative industries and cultural tourism programs 2. Support and develop spaces and programs that enable the establishment and growth of creative businesses and enterprises 3. Provide opportunities to connect people with creative career, education and training pathways				
Key Actions	Current	2019	2020	2021
Implement the Art Boost Program for emerging regional artists	2	3	3	3
Develop regional creative enterprise and small business development training programs in partnership with Riverina Murray BEC		5	8	10
Develop regional programs that support the development of creative industries through training, funding and incubator space		DENILQUIN	MOAMA	
Develop a broader range of secondary and tertiary educational options that provide for the diverse needs of the current population and create new learning and career pathways				Plan developed
Work with secondary schools to develop local access to tertiary education opportunities for creative industry through remote learning partnerships with universities			Consultations commenced. SWA sub-committee	



# GOAL 5: Ensure a creative future

**Ensuring our creative future** makes certain we continue to invest in ourselves. This goal is the final and most critical in safeguarding the sustainability of the artists, the workers and the groups that underpin the sector. The capacity of the sector is energized by the local people whose combined passion and enthusiasm drive the regional outcomes. They need to be empowered and supported to build local leadership capacity.

*Supporting the sustainability  
of artists, creative industry  
workers and cultural groups*

## **STRATEGY 1 - Encourage development through regional partnerships and mentoring**

There is talent in the region of an international standard that needs to be nurtured and developed. Support is required to enable these individual artists and organisations to learn new skills, promote their work and grow their businesses.

By creating strategies and programs at a regional level there will be an increase in scope, efficiencies and outcomes.

South West Arts has identified that there is a need for growth and development that requires regional-level collaboration and cooperation. The large physical area and small populations limits opportunities for development within individual communities. A regional focus can be achieved while also recognising the importance of local decision making and individual cultural expression.

South West Arts aims to inspire regional thinking by encouraging and facilitating collaborations between LGAs, towns and community groups that lead to greater and more sustainable opportunities for participation, and cross-community awareness of events and projects. We aim to develop networks that connect communities, organisations, businesses and individuals across different sectors to focus on developing Arts and Culture for the entire region.



STRATEGY 2 - Develop skills in local groups and organisations to lead arts and culture participation

Groups and organisations form out of common and shared interests and values. Many find themselves in positions of leadership and influence and operating at a level beyond the original intent or scope.

By supporting skills in organisational development, leadership, governance, marketing and promotion, social networking and collaborative project development, the capacity of local groups and organisations to lead Arts and Cultural participation and practice at the local and regional level increases.

STRATEGY 3 - Build capacity within the arts and culture community

The sustainability of community and cultural groups in rural and regional locations has always been a contentious issue. Despite a significant representation of small groups and community subsets there is often a lack of governing support at a leadership level. As with many community led endeavours, these groups are often run by the same people across several different organisations, leading to burnout and lack of equity within leadership positions.

In order to allow for local communities and groups to indeed develop, the existing capacity of those groups needs to be fostered.

This development and mediation must be done in such a way as to allow the community to implement their own sustainable solutions to problems in a way that enables them to shape and exercise control over their communities and environments, giving a sense of agency.<sup>25</sup>

Goal 5: Ensure a creative Future  
Supporting the sustainability of artists, creative industry workers and cultural groups

- Strategies:
- 1. Encourage development through regional partnerships and mentoring
  - 2. Develop skills in local groups and organisations to lead Arts and Culture participation
  - 3. Build capacity within the Arts and Culture community

Key Actions	Current	2019	2020	2021
Provide access to governance and business development skills and training to regional Arts and Cultural groups and organisations		10		
Provide and or encourage participation in marketing, promotion and social media training to regional Arts and Cultural organisations		5		10
Develop a collaborative network to share resources and create political capital to advocate for local Arts and Culture outcomes	Sub-committee established			
Develop programs that incorporate organisations from all areas of the region	1	1	1	1



A photograph of a vast field of yellow flowers, likely Helichrysum, with green stems and leaves. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains under a cloudy sky. The image is used as a background for the text.

# Understanding each LGA

The following ideas presented come from community consultations held in each LGA.

The ideas are intended to inspire planning and development by Councils, Government(s) and other key organisations, ignite conversations and empower community groups to take action.



## BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL

*'We need to think more creatively about who the influencers are in our community and look for leadership that will ignite the flame of creativity and innovation across all sectors...'*

**Council must seek to integrate Arts and Culture into everything they do'**  
workshop participant, Balranald

The communities of the Balranald Shire would like to see:

- Council employ a Community and Cultural Development Officer to support the local Arts and Cultural organisations, develop and enhance community events and to encourage the integration of Arts and Cultural development into Council planning, strategies and policies.
- Develop a Cultural Strategy for Balranald Shire that focuses on sustainable cultural infrastructure asset planning and development
- A focus on activities and opportunities for young people
- Share knowledge of Country and First Nation cultural heritage with the whole of the community and celebrate the unique Indigenous culture
- Incorporate acknowledgement of traditional owners in formal Council functions and events
- Iconic Tourism (eg. Mungo, Yanga and National Parks) needs to be respectful of the Indigenous communities and link to all Indigenous communities of the region
- Greater investment in cultural assets such as the Balranald Theatre, Balranald Art Gallery, Balranald Museum, Euston River Walk
- Greater advocacy for the communities of the Shire to the Federal and State Governments for better access to services and resources which generally are provided remotely from large regional centres

## BERRIGAN SHIRE COUNCIL

*'There is a wonderful opportunity to develop social enterprises based on the arts in partnership with Council that can engage young and older members of the community and create economic and social outcomes'*

Business owner, Tocumwal

The communities of the Berrigan Shire would like to see:

- Development of a Social Enterprise Business Plan
- Greater support for growing and developing events as festivals as a tourism development strategy
- Investment in public art, heritage, walks and passive recreation activities
- Development of a strategy to encourage travellers to stop in towns along the highway including travellers rest stops, better public toilets, RV stops, parks and activities for children, connected walks to main shopping centres incorporating public art and heritage
- Greater investment in cultural assets such as community halls and libraries
- Town entrance upgrades and main street beautification with Arts and Cultural features



## CARRATHOOL SHIRE COUNCIL

***'The agriculture sector is very important to the economy but equally, Arts and Culture are important to the social well-being and health of the shire'***

workshop participant, Hillston

The communities of the Carrathool Shire would like to see:

- Community Development and Tourism strategies incorporating public art, signage, walks and RV friendly campsites, upgraded "creative" public toilets, to encourage travellers to stop in Shire communities
- Overcome limiting beliefs of the value of Arts and Cultural development to both economic and social development
- Business skills support to develop Arts and Cultural social enterprises
- Development of a Cultural asset map and infrastructure plan to support greater investment in community assets such as halls, visitor information, public art, walks and historical assets
- Greater Council focus on community engagement and empowerment to help drive community development outcomes and sustainability of volunteer community resources
- Greater advocacy/engagement with Griffith Visitor Information Centre to increase day trips into the Shire
- Development of a Shire-wide Cultural Tourism trail incorporating food and providore
- Indigenous Cultural awareness and appreciation of significant Indigenous presence in the Shire
- Encourage community collaborations, networks and skills development

## EDWARD RIVER COUNCIL

***'Deniliquin has the opportunity to become an Arts and Cultural leader and regional advocate for neighbouring small communities and shires'***

Community member, Wanganella

The communities of the Edward River Council would like to see:

- Development of a creative industries workforce attraction strategy to support innovation in traditional employment sectors, including supported studio incubation spaces
- Development of a cultural strategy that will underpin Council's investment and resourcing in Arts and Culture
- Asset mapping and long-term infrastructure planning including environmental assets
- Public art and walks particularly in smaller communities
- A greater Arts and Cultural focus applied to all strategy and asset planning
- Development of a strategy to encourage traveller rests and visitation to smaller communities
- Partnerships with Indigenous community to incorporate significant cultural history into tourism product mix
- Development of a Tertiary Education Strategy that incorporates arts, culture and creative industry education and employment pathways



## HAY SHIRE COUNCIL

*'Council should focus more on empowering community and economic development'*

Business owner, Hay

The communities of the Hay Shire would like to see:

- Greater investment and the strategic development of the significant cultural tourism and heritage assets in Hay – The War Memorial Hall/ museum; Shear Outback; Gaol; Bishops Lodge; Railway Museum
- Acknowledgement of Indigenous heritage and community
- Enhancement of tertiary education opportunities for young people, particularly in creative industries such as digital technology, design, screen, animation, virtual reality and augmented reality
- Development of a tourism promotional strategy to underpin the wellness, heritage, cultural and passive recreation messages
- Encouragement of small business development in wellness, health, arts, culture and creative industries
- Support for new and emerging events such as the Rainbow on the Plains and Make Hay Arts and Cultural festival
- Infrastructure upgrades and creative signage, particularly in Maude
- Development of an advocacy plan to rename the Mid Western Highway to the 'Wiradjuri Way' (Highway)

## MURRAY RIVER COUNCIL

*'Council amalgamations have reduced local relationships and personal connections'*

workshop participant, Moulamein

The communities of the Murray River Council would like to see:

- Increased resourcing, both financial and skills, to develop opportunities for community participation and community economic development including:
  - Events and festivals (existing and new)
  - Tourism trails and infrastructure
  - Public art
  - Creative Industries small business development
- Stronger relationships with neighbouring Councils in both Victoria and NSW to develop Regional tourism product including touring routes, the natural environmental and Indigenous Cultural assets
- Development of Arts and Cultural plan that supports grass roots driven projects
- Overcome limiting beliefs of the value of Arts and Cultural development to both economic and social development
- Strengthen relationships with all traditional owner groups across the municipality to inform cultural heritage knowledge and create opportunities for celebration
- Identify and develop community infrastructure to enable the creation of suitable spaces for Arts and Cultural development
- Promotion and advocacy for Cultural Tourism development



# Neighbouring Victorian LGAs

The importance of cross-border relationships cannot be overstated. Economic growth, community relationships, social well-being and health require collaboration at a regional level.

This region has an enviable competitive advantage to maximise outcomes from advocacy and leverage across two States.

## SHIRE OF CAMPASPE

The communities of the Shire of Campaspe would like to see:

- Development of an Arts and Cultural development strategy and supporting policies
- Incorporate Arts and Cultural thinking into planning and asset management
- Recognition of the Indigenous History and Heritage into the Port of Echuca
- Support grass roots Arts and Cultural project development
- Asset mapping to identify Arts and Cultural touring route
- Focus on food to support Arts and Cultural tourism
- Greater collaboration with NSW Arts and Cultural development organisations
- Recognition of performing and visual arts as influencers of cultural tourism
- Protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites
- Incorporation of public art into environmental river trails and walks that link Barmah Gunbower and Koondrook cultural heritage and environmental sites of significance

## GANNAWARRA SHIRE

The communities of the Gannawarra Shire would like to see:

- Greater incorporation of public art into environmental river trails and walks that link Barmah Gunbower and Koondrook cultural heritage and environmental sites of significance
- Incorporation of Arts and Culture into Tourism development strategies
- Promotion of Indigenous Cultural Heritage
- Greater cooperation with NSW river Council's
- Incorporation of Arts and Culture planning in asset development and maintenance
- Incorporation of public art into parks and gardens
- Development of small towns as Arts and Culture small business hubs and social enterprise centres

## MOIRA SHIRE

The communities of Moira Shire would like to see:

- Asset mapping to identify Arts and Cultural touring route
- Incorporation of Arts and Culture into Tourism development strategies
- Greater emphasis on significant Indigenous culture and partnerships with Indigenous organisations
- Greater investment in Public Art and incorporation into walking paths and trails
- Development of an Arts and Cultural festival
- Development of heritage assets for Arts and Cultural activities and enterprises
- Incorporation of public art into environmental river trails and walks that link Barmah Gunbower and Koondrook cultural heritage and environmental sites of significance

## RURAL CITY OF SWAN HILL

The communities of Swan Hill would like to see:

- Asset mapping to identify Arts and Cultural touring route throughout the Shire
- Development of and Arts and Culture strategy
- Greater emphasis on Arts and Culture in Tourism development and marketing strategies
- Greater investment in Public Art and incorporation into walking paths and trails
- Development of an Arts and Cultural festival in Swan Hill
- Greater support and investment in the Swan Hill Gallery
- Promotion of local and regional artists
- Development of creative industries small business incubator



# Governance and Leadership

## Changing focus from delivery to development

Since South West Arts was established in 1983, the opportunities for participation in Arts and Culture activities have grown throughout the region. Whereas once South West Arts provided access to, and participation in, Arts and Culture activities, now these opportunities are being delivered by other skilled and established organisations such as South West Music Regional Conservatorium and Outback Theatre for Young People as well as local community groups and organisations.

South West Arts recognised that it suffered 'mission drift' as the skills and experience throughout the region developed to deliver the Arts and Culture activities they once delivered.

Over the past two years South West Arts has shifted its emphasis, away from Arts and Culture delivery, to development. Consultation and strategic examination confirmed the need across our region to focus on and fill the role of developing sustainable Arts and Culture.

By focusing on the development of local Arts and Culture, there is opportunity to support the creative potential of current and future generations in the region and to create a shared cultural identity that underpins healthy and productive communities and economies.

South West Arts has the unique opportunity to bring together the best Arts and Culture thinking to benefit the entire region. South West Arts will focus on developing strategic approaches to skill and education pathways, participation and community wellbeing, cultural assets and economic opportunities that benefit the entire region. This reflects the Arts and Cultural development focus required by our communities.

## Financial Overview

South West Arts remains reliant on the ongoing funding commitment from Create NSW and our LGA partners to maintain its financial position. Project expenditure is totally reliant on grant funding and in-kind support from partner organisations and community volunteers.

It needs to be recognised that the funding model for the organisation is not sustainable. With no increases in State Government operational funding over a four-year period, coupled with rising operating costs, funds previously used to support performances, exhibitions and workshops have been eroded to fund increases in operational expenses. Cost increases include CPI increases in rent and outgoings, increasing fuel, energy and communication costs, equipment upgrades such as vehicle leases and simply the cost of doing business across a large geographic region and multiple communities.

All projects and programs delivered within the region are now reliant on successful applications via the competitive grants process and/or the skills and expertise of the South West Arts personnel.



Structural strengths and weaknesses

KEY BUSINESS RISKS

The major obstacles to achieving our strategic plan lie in our resource capacity to ensure continuity of delivery.

STRENGTHS

Our strength is anchored on the expertise and robust experience that our Board of Directors and key personnel are bringing to the table. Beyond their expertise and robust experience, their networks are also a great strength to the organisation.

This strategic plan is an important legacy for future staff, board and other stakeholders in not only identifying the key issues, opportunities and needs for continued Arts and Cultural development, but for identifying what must occur for the future development and maturity of economic and social well-being outcomes in the South West of NSW.

WEAKNESSES

Our weakness, just like the weakness of most not for profit organisations, is the ability to attract and sustain our key positions. The arts sector traditionally offers wages below most other industry sectors. It difficult to attract, pay and keep experts, particularly in regional areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities for Arts and Cultural development in the South West region of NSW are unlimited however, our relationships with our key partner organisations, including those in neighbouring Victoria, remains a critical success factor in the sustainability, reach and output of the organisation.

THREATS

One of the major threats we face is generating the required funds needed to achieve our goals and strategies, recruiting and retaining key and competent employees, as well as managing our financial and human resources. Our current financial resources do not ensure we will be able to sustain the existing skills and expertise to deliver this plan.

Governance and Leadership

- Strategies:
- 1. Ensure that SWA is managed in a sound and financially responsible manner
  - 2. Ensure a Sustainable Operational Framework
  - 3. Undertake continuous improvement assessments to ensure policies and procedures are effective and relevant
  - 4. Provide regional leadership to maximise investment in cultural infrastructure

Key Actions	Current	2019	2020	2021
Undertake a review all SWA Policies	50% completed	100% completed		
Develop an operational business management and financial plan		JUNE 2019	Review	
Develop a resource plan for the implementation of this plan		JUNE 2019	Review	



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South West Arts is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and Regional Arts NSW, in partnership with the Local Government Areas of Balranald, Berrigan, Carrathool, Edward River, Hay and Murray River.



REGIONAL ARTS  
NSW





**Arts and Cultural Development Plan for the South West region of NSW 2018 - 2021**

Published in June 2018 by South West Arts

**[southwestarts.com.au](http://southwestarts.com.au)**