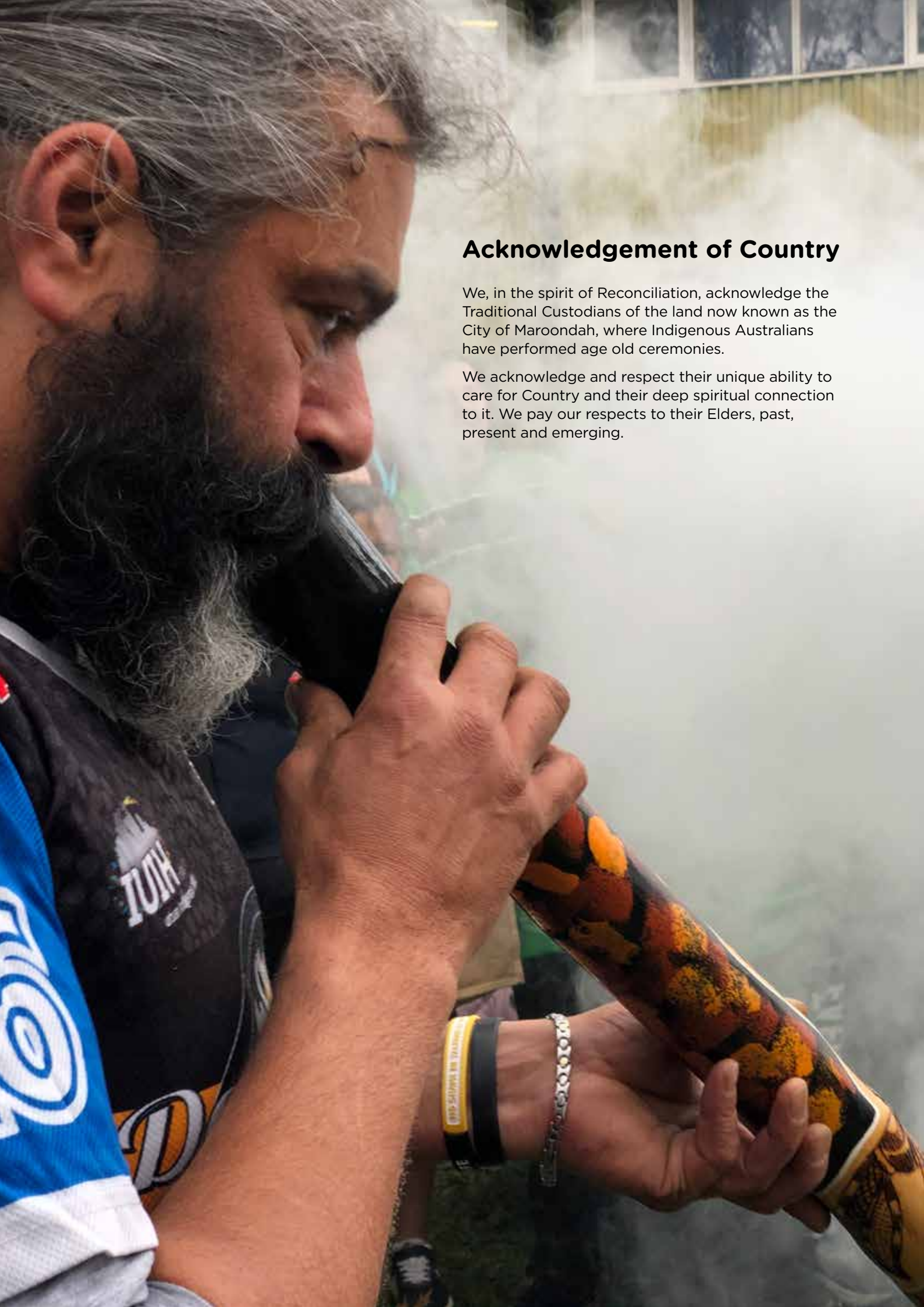


# Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025

Working towards a vibrant and culturally rich community





## Acknowledgement of Country

We, in the spirit of Reconciliation, acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah, where Indigenous Australians have performed age old ceremonies.

We acknowledge and respect their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection to it. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



# Working towards a vibrant and culturally rich community

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*Cover: The Backyard is Ringwood arts precinct's most surprising space.*

*It features outstanding murals, performances and events.*

*Inside cover: Smoking Ceremony performed by Chris Hume, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place.*



# Welcome

The *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025* sets out the key directions for arts and cultural development in Maroondah over the next five years. It represents a significant commitment by Council to lead, partner and support the arts and culture. It is for everyone who lives, works or plays in Maroondah, particularly those interested in the creative and cultural life of our city.

The strategy will be of special interest to the partners we will work with over the next five years, including the many artists, practitioners and groups; businesses; community organisations; and creative industries who share the vision for Maroondah as a vibrant and culturally rich community.

Arts and cultural activity is a key ingredient in the liveability of Maroondah - a city which has a proud history of participation and celebration of the arts. A wide range of artists and creative practitioners call Maroondah home and there are many active arts and cultural groups, a range of established and successful programs, and some outstanding achievements within the region.

Five years ago, Council consulted extensively with the community and other stakeholders to develop a vision for the future of Maroondah that would reflect the aspirations and hopes of our community. *The Maroondah 2040 'Our future together' Community Vision* identified that 'a vibrant and culturally rich community' was a key priority area for Maroondah. At that time, Council also developed Maroondah's first *Arts and Cultural Development Strategy (2014)*, responding to the aspirations of our community and key stakeholders who told us they wanted to be part of a culturally rich and vibrant community with 'art everywhere, everyday'.

Since 2014, we have seen unprecedented growth in participation, attendance, profile and support for arts and culture in Maroondah.

Together we have been building arts and culture as part of everyday life for residents and visitors to Maroondah - from public art projects to the introduction of new arts spaces and programs particularly at Realm and within the Ringwood arts precinct. Highlights of arts and culture programming over the past five years have been achieved through extensive engagement with artists and local communities, the development of many outstanding events and exhibitions, as well as participatory activities promoting wellbeing, and creative ways of celebrating and valuing Maroondah's natural environment.

Our sense of place is linked to our understanding of our environment and where we have come from. For more than 60,000 years the people of the Kulin nation have been the traditional owners of the area. Today, Maroondah is also home to Mulum Mulum Indigenous Gathering Place, which brings together community members from across the eastern region who have diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories.

There are many other histories and stories associated with Maroondah, and cultural diversity is increasing with newly arriving communities including the largest Burmese community in Melbourne's eastern region. Arts and culture can provide inspiring and transformative ways of raising awareness and building appreciation of all our peoples.

# Community Vision

Maroondah is a vibrant and connected community recognised for its creativity and innovation, and for its celebration and promotion of arts and cultural excellence.

Participation and engagement in contemporary and traditional forms of creative and cultural expression and the experience of the arts as a part of everyday life, contributes to individual and community wellbeing, knowledge and quality of life.

In developing the *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025*, community members and residents, artists and people involved in the creative industries, key groups and organisations, as well as Council service areas and other key stakeholders have:

- endorsed the key achievements of the past five years
- confirmed on-going support for the directions established in the first strategy
- suggested areas to improve and strengthen arts and cultural sustainability
- identified new opportunities to extend the reach of successful activities and to increase profile across the municipality.

The next five years will be another exciting and productive period for arts and cultural development in Maroondah as we continue to implement the community's vision and strengthen our position as an arts and cultural leader in the eastern region.

We will continue to implement our key directions, develop Maroondah's public spaces so that they are inclusive and culturally vibrant, and develop new and strengthened partnerships. We will build on and celebrate the strengths and quality of our cultural heritage and our existing creative spaces, programs and cultural assets including the public art collection and the Maroondah City Council Art Collection.

Together with our community, we look forward to being challenged, educated, delighted, amazed and connected to our heritage and to each other through the arts. With this strategy, Council re-affirms its commitment to supporting and promoting excellence in arts and cultural offerings and to leading the realisation of the community's vision for a culturally rich and vibrant Maroondah.



# Executive summary

The story and identity of Maroondah owes much to its many cultural strengths, its active and creative community, and its popular and successful arts facilities, programs and events.

In the past five years, a new chapter in Maroondah's cultural story has been emerging with exciting new developments in:

- creating new spaces and places for the arts
- experiencing the arts as part of everyday life
- connecting communities, culture, and the environment
- presenting innovative and contemporary practice across all art forms
- strengthening the links between arts and wellbeing.

The growth of Ringwood as a Metropolitan Activity Centre has provided transformative opportunities for the creation of vibrant and creative spaces, where the arts can be experienced by all. The new arts spaces within Realm and Ringwood Town Square have introduced contemporary and highly successful arts experiences to hundreds of thousands of visitors. The developing Ringwood arts precinct extends beyond Realm to include a walkable network of indoor and outdoor spaces linking Ringwood Town Square, the Backyard, Ringwood Station and Maroondah Federation Estate. The arts and creativity connect with people as they work, go about their business, visit the library, commute, shop, or simply have a coffee or a wander. New infrastructure and improvements in the Croydon Activity Centre are also paving the way for greater arts activation as part of a more culturally vibrant precinct.

During this time Council's established facilities - Maroondah Federation Estate Gallery, Wyreena Community Arts Centre and Karralyka Centre - have continued to evolve and flourish. Visitation and participation to exhibitions, installations, events and activities programmed as part of the Ringwood arts precinct alone have attracted over 130,000 visitors in the past year.

The *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025* will build on the development and achievements of the past five years, further establishing Maroondah's position as an arts and cultural leader within the eastern region. Council will work in partnership with the community, artists and industry to support, engage, connect, create and enable the arts and culture to be experienced as an intrinsic and valued part of everyday life in Maroondah.

The *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025* includes:

- background on how the strategy was developed
- the key directions for the next five years and guiding principles to underpin them
- an outline of how the arts will be integrated across key functions of Council
- the role of Council and key stakeholders in arts and cultural development, facilities and assets
- Council's commitment to support, monitor and evaluate the strategy.

The strategy also outlines what the Maroondah of the future will look like, including exciting developments such as the Croydon Community Precinct and further development of the Ringwood arts precinct, as well as the important work of developing the arts and creative participation across Maroondah.

*Opposite: The BeBlocks at Ringwood Station, Community Stations program.*



# About the *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025*

The strategy sets out the roadmap for the next five years, building on our established strengths, achievements and directions and guiding new priorities for a culturally rich and vibrant Maroondah.

## Key directions

Through the consultations and research undertaken for the strategy, three outcome areas have emerged to focus the work of Council and its partners over the next five years to achieve the community's vision.

These are:

- a culturally active, engaged and connected community
- vibrant places and spaces
- a city which is creative, flourishing and values the arts

The strategy enables Council to direct investment and efforts towards goals that have been developed in consultation with community members, artists and creative industry stakeholders and internal and external partners. It sets out clear and achievable outcomes for the next five years and will continue to involve the Maroondah community in shaping and realising this vision for the future.

## Who is the strategy for?

In addition to guiding Council's directions and priorities, the strategy is for:

- everyone who lives, works, or visits Maroondah, particularly those interested in the creative and cultural life of our city
- existing and new partners that Council will work with over the next five years, including artists and creative practitioners; arts, cultural and community groups; businesses; and creative industries who all share in the vision for Maroondah as a vibrant and culturally rich community.

## Guiding principles

The strategy is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- Support and present excellence and quality in the arts.
- Promote inclusion and diversity.
- Honour and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture.
- Facilitate creative and cultural participation.
- Support the community benefits of the arts.
- Build on foundations and strengths.
- Support artists and creative industries.
- Work with internal and external partners.
- Promote the sharing of expertise and experience.
- Ensure that the Key Directions are achievable.



## Maroondah’s Integrated Planning Framework

Council’s strategic documents, such as the *Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020 - 2025* are linked through an Integrated Planning Framework which seeks to ensure Council’s activities and resources are aligned to meet the aspirations, needs and expectations of the Maroondah community, as shown in the following diagram:



This framework is underpinned by the long-term strategic vision presented in *Maroondah 2040 ‘Our future together’*:

*In 2040, Maroondah will be a vibrant and diverse city with a healthy and active community, living in green leafy neighbourhoods which are connected to thriving and accessible activity centres contributing to a prosperous economy within a safe, inclusive and sustainable environment.*

*Maroondah 2040 ‘Our future together’* also identifies eight key outcome areas which align with the community’s aspirations, desires, dreams, and priorities looking ahead to the year 2040 and beyond:

- A safe, healthy and active community
- A prosperous and learning community
- A vibrant and culturally rich community
- A clean, green and sustainable community
- An accessible and connected community
- An attractive, thriving and well-built community
- An inclusive and diverse community
- A well governed and empowered community.

The *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025* reflects and contributes to these key outcome areas and has a particular focus on *A vibrant and culturally rich community*. It will lead an integrated approach to arts and cultural development activity across Council and the community over the next five years.



# How was the Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy developed?

## Our starting point: Reflecting on the achievements of the past five years

Developing this strategy has provided the opportunity to pause and reflect on the implementation and achievements of the past strategy.

Important developments over the past five years include:

- the opening of ArtSpace at Realm
- the creation of the Ringwood arts precinct, linking Ringwood Town Square and Realm, Ringwood Station and Maroondah Federation Estate. The precinct includes unique and surprising spaces for arts experiences such as The Backyard and an outstanding series of urban art
- highly successful contemporary arts programming as part of the Ringwood arts precinct bringing together arts, culture, and creativity as part of everyday life
- a new direction for Maroondah Federation Estate Gallery as a space for exhibitions by emerging artists, community and works from the Maroondah City Council Art Collection
- development of a *Public Art Policy*
- unprecedented levels of external funding and partnerships
- links and partnerships built across all areas of Council to promote the integration of arts and cultural priorities within indoor and outdoor spaces and precinct developments
- development of the Croydon Town Square
- increased networks, connections and collaborations between locally based artists and groups including the Maroondah Arts Collective with 255 members.

Council has worked closely with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place over the past five years, and the work of many Indigenous artists and cultural groups has been celebrated through highly successful exhibitions, projects, programs, and events.

The previous strategy's emphasis on growing partnerships and creative collaborations has included local businesses and community organisations, artists and creative professionals. Maroondah now has a flourishing local arts network, the Maroondah Arts Collective, connecting and supporting artists to develop their practice and businesses.

The Maroondah Arts Advisory Committee was established in 2018 to assist with informing and advising Council on ways to realise the community's vision for a creative and culturally vibrant Maroondah.

The Committee advocates for the arts in Maroondah and advises on approvals such as public art commissions. It promotes partnerships for the arts and encourages integration across other Council committees. The Committee includes three Councillors and seven community and industry representatives who live, work, or who have expertise relevant to the arts in Maroondah including:

- Indigenous arts, culture and community
- creative industries
- contemporary and traditional arts practices including music, theatre, visual and public arts
- socially engaged and inclusive practice across age groups and interests
- marketing and partnerships.

*Opposite: Cyclo Illuminato lights up Ringwood Town Square.*



*A display of models created by Isobel Knowles and Van Sowerwine for the animated virtual reality film, Passenger. Presented as part of the ArtSpace exhibition Take me with you.*

Some of the key achievements of the previous strategy include:

- significant growth in the profile and participation in the arts
- increased awareness and recognition by Council, business and community partners of the contribution of arts and creativity across social, economic, environmental, and cultural domains
- an unprecedented increase in arts audiences, visitors and participants to key facilities and precincts. Between 2013-2014 and 2018-2019 visitation and participation within the Ringwood arts precinct increased from 6200 to 130,600 while Wyreena Community Arts Centre experienced an increase from 52,000 to 88,570.
- highly successful and engaging indoor and outdoor public art commissions across Maroondah
- establishment of the Maroondah Art Trail of cafés promoting local artists
- outstanding collaborations between artists and local communities including the Ringwood arts precinct projects of 2017-18 funded by Creative Victoria, where leading artists and companies - Rawcus, Snuff Puppets, Kutcha Edwards, Westside Circus and Playable Streets - worked with local and marginalised communities
- innovative arts and wellbeing initiatives developed in partnership with mental health and suicide prevention agencies
- increased support for artists of all abilities and creative participation of community members across all age groups and backgrounds.

## Reflecting on Maroondah’s key cultural facilities and assets

The City of Maroondah has a range of key cultural facilities which are an important consideration for effective arts and cultural development planning. These include:

### ArtSpace at Realm

Realm is a state-of-the-art facility that leads the creative, education and prosperous development of Maroondah and Melbourne’s eastern region. The curated ArtSpace at Realm features dynamic contemporary exhibitions as well as interactive Arts Incubators. ArtWall features temporary murals and installations and public art is integrated across the facility. Varied programs at Realm include live music, theatre performances, workshops, installations and curated displays within the Collectors’ Cabinets.

### Ringwood arts precinct

The Ringwood arts precinct is a walkable network of exciting and diverse indoor and outdoor spaces within the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre. It includes Realm, Ringwood Town Square, the Ringwood Station, and the Backyard as well as the nearby Maroondah Federation Estate. High quality, exciting and often surprising experiences range from contemporary and traditional exhibitions, to indoor and outdoor music and theatre performances, to a guided walk visiting an outstanding and growing collection of street art. Over the past five years, visitation and audiences for arts activities, exhibitions, installations and events within the precinct have grown from approximately 6,200 to around 130,000 annually.

### Maroondah Federation Estate Gallery

The Gallery is located within Ringwood’s community and cultural facility Maroondah Federation Estate. Exhibitions and associated activities present a broad range of contemporary and traditional visual arts practices. The Gallery’s annual exhibition program includes a focus on supporting emerging artists and presenting established artists and groups from Maroondah and the local region as well as presenting works from the Maroondah City Council Art Collection.

### Maroondah City Council Art Collection

The Collection holds a wide range of paintings, prints, photography, ceramics and sculpture by Australian artists from colonial times to the present. It includes works by leading contemporary and historic Australian artists with a focus on Indigenous artists from across Australia, and works that explore Maroondah’s cultural heritage. The Collection continues to grow through the triennial R & M McGivern Art Prize, Council’s annual acquisition fund, and donations received through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program.



*Works from the Maroondah City Council Art Collection featured in the exhibition ‘Of Earth and Fire’ at Maroondah Federation Estate Gallery.*



### Public art

Guided by Maroondah's *Public Art Policy* and responding to the community's desire for traditional and contemporary art forms in public places, Maroondah's collection of indoor and outdoor public art continues to grow. Some of the significant commissions include:

- Spotted Marsh Frog (Ian Bracegirdle), Croydon
- Maroondah Nets Mural (Ash Keating), Heathmont
- A Weight of Albatross (Louise Jennison and Gracia Haby), Realm, Ringwood
- Mullum Mullum the Owl (William Eicholtz), Mullum Mullum Trail, Ringwood
- Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos (Rob Bast), Longview Road, Croydon South
- Aquanation public art (Anna Minardo), Aquanation, Ringwood

### Wyreena Community Arts Centre

Set in one of Croydon's historic buildings and located on four acres of gardens, Wyreena Community Arts Centre is a highly valued creative centre for the whole community. It provides courses and workshops for children and adults, an adventure playground, as well as a cafe and gallery, and an Arts Lounge featuring works by local artists.

### Karralyka Centre

The premier theatre and function centre in Maroondah within an architecturally award-winning building (designed by Harry Seidler with modifications by other architects), Karralyka presents a popular theatre program while also providing outstanding facilities for hire.



*Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos by Rob Bast.*

## Development of the strategy for 2020-2025

Informed by reflections on the achievements of the past five years and by an understanding of Council's key cultural facilities and assets, the strategy has been developed through a combination of research, review and consultation.

### Policy context

A review of key national, state and local government policies relating to arts and cultural development has helped to set the context for the strategy. Within Maroondah's Integrated Planning Framework, the 2040 Community Vision is the guiding document with its vision for a community that is vibrant and culturally rich, as well as:

- safe, healthy and active
- prosperous and learning
- clean, green and sustainable
- attractive, thriving and well built.

A range of other internal strategies and plans were also reviewed to ensure alignment of goals and activities, across Council including:

- *Maroondah City Council Children's Plan (2015-2019)*
- *Maroondah Disability Policy and Action Plan (2019-2021)*
- *Maroondah Health and Wellbeing Plan (2017 to 2021)*
- *Open Space Strategy (2016)*
- *Youth Strategy (2017)*
- *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020.*

### Consultation with the Maroondah Arts Advisory Committee and the Maroondah community

The Maroondah Arts Advisory Committee has provided invaluable advice and guidance during the planning and development of the strategy. The Maroondah community also contributed through a range of consultation opportunities and service areas across Council have also contributed their knowledge and expertise.



*The Wyreena Community Arts Centre gardens come alive for Halloween with fairies, witches and wizards.*



# What is Council's role in arts and cultural development?

Council has a vital leadership role in arts and cultural development, setting the vision and policy direction for Maroondah and liaising and consulting across local government and other levels of government.

Council's role includes a focus on working together with our community and a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Within Council, the Arts and Cultural Development team provide leadership in arts and cultural development planning, providing advice, developing partnerships and encouraging leading practice across other internal service areas.

Council will:

**Advocate** to the Victorian Government on behalf of the people of Maroondah about arts policy and practice which impacts on the cultural vitality of Maroondah.

**Plan, facilitate and resource** our arts and cultural infrastructure, programming and opportunities, to respond to changing community demographics, needs and aspirations.

This includes:

- integrating cultural values and opportunities within major precinct developments, ensuring that our Activity Centres are creative places which celebrate and promote the heritage and values of our people.
- facilitating opportunities for our community, artists and other stakeholders to work together in realising a shared vision for a culturally rich and vibrant Maroondah.
- evaluating and reporting on the work that we do.



*Maroondah Symphony Orchestra led by conductor Willem van der Vis.*



**Develop, commission and present** contemporary and traditional arts and cultural experiences, exhibitions, events and activities. This includes arts and cultural programming in community and cultural facilities, outdoor and open spaces and community festivals as well as projects developed with arts, business and industry partners, including:

- the Maroondah City Council Art Collection
- the R & M McGivern Prize which is held every three years and attracts artists from across Australia.

The winning artwork is acquired for the Maroondah City Council Art Collection.

- the Public Art Collection.

Commissions will be aligned with the directions of the *Public Art Policy* and artists will be invited to develop proposals for indoor and outdoor spaces across Maroondah.

**Promote and inform** the community and its partners about the role and value of arts and culture, and about Council's support for arts and cultural development. It will promote arts and creative opportunities through effective marketing strategies tailored to arts audiences as well as

strategies for the wider community. This will include further development of the Arts in Maroondah marketing strategy and also general marketing and communications through Council's communication channels.

**Provide and manage facilities and spaces**

including ArtSpace at Realm, Maroondah Federation Estate Gallery, Wyreena Community Arts Centre and the Karralyka Centre. It will review, plan, develop and provide new and existing spaces and facilities in response to needs and opportunities.

**Promote participation and local networks** aligned with the directions of the strategy including:

- the Maroondah Arts Collective
- the annual Arts and Cultural Grants Program which supports a range of diverse and local community-driven projects, initiatives and events.



*Wyreena Community Arts Centre connects place, people and creativity.*



# How will the arts and cultural development vision be realised?

Council will work together with the community and key partners to realise the vision for a creative and culturally vibrant Maroondah.

This includes partners from:

**Artists and creative industries** - Leading and recognised artists and creative leaders across all art forms and arts, cultural and community organisations at the local and state level are key partners. The Maroondah Arts Advisory Committee includes members with knowledge, expertise and networks in Indigenous arts and culture and a range of contemporary and traditional arts practices including music, theatre, visual and public arts. In addition to Council's networks across the creative sector, the Committee is also a key conduit for connecting with local and regional creative practitioners and creative industries.

**Community** - Partners from within the Maroondah community include artists, arts groups and organisations.

Council has a strong relationship with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place as well as a wide range of community organisations and diverse cultural communities. Council partners with schools, community organisations and agencies who use the arts in their work to promote access and inclusion, participation and wellbeing.

**Business** - Council supports and promotes local business networks, groups and individual businesses and recognises the value of culturally vibrant places to shop and visit. Key partnerships which support Activity Centres as creative places include Eastland and other businesses within the Ringwood arts precinct, and the Croydon Main Street Traders Association.

**Government** - Council will continue to actively participate and contribute to local government networks to share our knowledge, explore partnerships and ensure that we are up-to-date with key trends and local government initiatives across the state.

**Within Council** - The Arts and Cultural Development team will provide specialist knowledge and expertise to lead the implementation of the Strategy and will liaise, partner and provide expert advice to internal and external partners. Given the clear reach and benefits of arts and culture across many segments of community life, the Strategy will be implemented in a holistic way across Council's functions and facilities.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Council recognises the importance of transparency and accountability and the value of ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Implementation of the *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020 - 2025* will be assessed and reviewed through a range of industry-standard quantitative and qualitative indicators.

An evaluation framework and approach will be established in the first year of the Strategy. In line with contemporary cultural development thinking, the framework will allow for assessing cultural outcomes and also contributions to social, civic, economic and environmental outcomes. Discrete evaluations may be conducted for projects of strategic importance which offer opportunities to learn, direct our investments and share our learnings.

Maroondah's approach will be informed by significant work currently being developed at the state and national levels.

*Opposite: Exploring Ringwood Town Square through a creative lens. Community workshop by Lynda Roberts and Ceri Hann as part of the ArtSpace at Realm exhibition 'Out of Viewfinder.'*



# What makes a creative and culturally vibrant community?

## Creative ecosystems

Contemporary thinking conceptualises the creative and cultural sectors as being part of an ecosystem comprised of interlinked, interdependent components; professional artists and amateurs; community groups and creative industries; arts infrastructure, and arts companies.

This approach recognises the role of individuals, collectives and organisations of all sizes and types in the overall health of the creative industries and seeks to create a whole that is stronger than the sum of its parts. (<https://engage.vic.gov.au/creative-strategy/guiding-principles>)

Creative Victoria explained their focus on ‘Strengthening the creative industries ecology by building capacity and unlocking opportunities to reach audiences’ in this way:

*“Individual practitioners are essential to a vibrant creative State. However, Victoria needs a strategy that nurtures all parts of the ecosystem, enabling individual practitioners to thrive alongside cultural organisations, businesses, entrepreneurs and infrastructure. A strong ecosystem will support a dynamic interplay between disciplines and across enterprises...”*

Creative Victoria Creative State, Global City Creative Industries Taskforce Report, November 2015

Local governments are uniquely positioned to work across the creative ecosystem within their municipalities and are critical in providing access to creative experiences and services for communities. Local governments also play a key role in commissioning and presenting the work of leading artists and creative practitioners as part of an enriched local culture that engages with new knowledge, insights and innovation.

The *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025* recognises the need to balance support and activity across all components of its local ecosystem.

This ranges from grassroots creative participation through to cutting-edge practice; from facility-based programming and precincts, through to small and informal activity at the neighbourhood level. The *Maroondah Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025* recognises the need to balance support and activity across all components of Maroondah’s creative and cultural ecosystem.

This ranges from grassroots creative participation through to cutting-edge practice; from cultural precincts and neighbourhood activity through to vibrant arts facilities.

It celebrates and promotes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous arts and cultural practice and enables all to feel that they part of our local culture regardless of their background, age or skills. It champions outstanding practice and excellence, such as through the R&M McGivern Prize, presenting great programming in our key cultural venues while integrating public art across our city.

Taking an ecological approach includes developing and exchanging skills and knowledge; taking risks and encouraging innovation; and providing creative spaces for a diversity of making, co-creating, and presenting new work.

Taking an ecological approach also includes supporting skill development and skill exchange; risk taking; innovation; and providing spaces for making and co-creating work as well as presenting.

Part of Council's leadership role also includes ensuring that cultural values and needs are integrated across its social, environmental and economic roles and advocating across the three tiers of government to further support this work.

**By including culture as a domain of public policy, and enabling citizens opportunities to express their culture, governments maximise the potential for human development. Access to, and participation in, cultural life is a fundamental right of individuals in all communities, and therefore governments have a duty to enable this expression and facilitate their citizens' human rights.**

<https://culturaldevelopment.net.au/policy-domains/cultural-domain-description/>



*'Bamboo Village: a Celebration of Cultures' featured dancers from local Falam Chin, Hakha Chin, Karen, Mizo and Zomi communities from Burma.*



# What will the Maroondah of the future look like?



*Weaving workshop led by Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Elder, Aunty Irene Norman.*

## Vibrant places and spaces

In addition to further strengthening the programming within Maroondah's existing cultural facilities, Council will continue to work with its partners over the next five years to develop creative approaches to placemaking and activating public spaces through the arts.

### **Croydon Activity Centre**

Integration of arts and cultural experiences will be a vital element for a vibrant Croydon Activity Centre which includes Croydon Main Street, Croydon Community Precinct and Tarralla Creek as well as Wyreena Community Arts Centre. A new community and cultural hub within the Croydon Community Precinct will provide inclusive opportunities for all ages and abilities, spaces for rehearsal and presentation of performances and community and cultural events.

There are opportunities to build stronger links between Wyreena Community Arts Centre and Croydon Main Street. Further development of public art, an art and heritage trail and a celebration of the local stories and village character will contribute to the success of this key activity centre within Maroondah.

### **Ringwood arts precinct**

A key focus area for the next five years will be to work in partnership with Eastland and other community partners to build further on the successful establishment of this precinct with its innovative and accessible programming for the whole community.

## A creative and flourishing city

### Arts across Maroondah

Local communities across Maroondah are keen to experience the arts within their neighbourhoods through a range of events and activities and as an integrated part of the built environment. Planning for local centres will include opportunities for activities which are driven by artists and local communities.

## A culturally active, engaged and connected community

### Indigenous arts and culture

The arts provide a powerful way to learn how to listen, to understand and respect, and to engage and reconcile with Indigenous community and culture. We will continue to work together with and promote Indigenous artists and communities through programming and presentation within our arts and cultural spaces as well as in community and public places.

### Community wellbeing

Over the next five years, we will help to build individual and community wellbeing through broad participation in arts and cultural activity. We will continue to develop innovative and creative responses to social issues, such as previous successful collaborative projects enhancing mental health and wellbeing and preventing family violence. The integration of arts and cultural spaces and activities within the new Croydon Community Precinct will include a focus on supporting and enhancing community wellbeing.

## Arts and environment

Maroondah has a unique environment that needs to be preserved and celebrated. Appreciation and awareness of the environment can be strengthened through carefully considered arts projects, exhibitions and events as well as through the integration of design, public art and interpretation.

Artists and creative ideas will be supported to respond to the environment and to enrich the culture of Maroondah.

## What are the key directions for arts and cultural development for the next five years?

Through the consultations and research undertaken for this strategy development, three outcome areas have emerged for the focus of work over the next five years. These are:

- A culturally active, engaged and connected community
- Vibrant places and spaces
- A city that is creative, flourishing and values the arts

Building on recent achievements, Maroondah is well on the journey to realising its vision as a vibrant and culturally rich community with creative places where people can experience the arts as part of everyday life through public art, exhibitions and pop-up events. Over the next five years there is significant opportunity to extend support for local creative industries and new spaces for the arts within key precincts.

These directions align with the focus areas of major national and state cultural organisations and will ensure that Council's arts and cultural development activity and Maroondah's local artists and creatives are in step with our partners and potential future funding opportunities.

In the following pages, the key directions for each outcome area are set out.



The 'Fruit Thief' mural, created for Croydon Main Street by Roger Archbold and Andy Drewitt (pictured).

# Key strategic directions

## Theme 1: A culturally active, engaged and connected community

Participating in the arts has multiple benefits for health and wellbeing: it reduces social isolation, strengthens community connection and builds self-esteem, as people pursue creative activity alone or in groups.

[VicHealth Arts Strategy 2019-2023](#), [VicHealth 2019](#)

### Our stakeholders said

The arts and creative participation have tremendous potential to enhance individual and community physical and mental wellbeing through creative expression, activity and engagement, and to connect places, people, generations and diverse cultural groups. The arts as a vehicle to strengthen and connect the community and support wellbeing came through strongly in stakeholder feedback, highlighting potential to:

- learn from and connect with Indigenous communities and knowledge through arts and culture
- reach marginalised and hard to reach population groups through the arts
- connect with nature and the natural environment through arts and culture
- enhance physical and mental health through arts participation and creative expression

- share stories to promote knowledge of history and cultural heritage
- engender community pride
- support civic participation and exploration of issues and ideas.

The community emphasised the importance of low-cost and accessible participatory arts, experiential opportunities, supporting enhanced mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as surprising, challenging and high-quality contemporary arts opportunities.

While the Arts and Cultural Development team is recognised as the key planner, driver and deliverer of arts and cultural activity, this is also seen as a shared responsibility across Council service areas. There is willingness and enthusiasm shown across Council to plan and work collaboratively on shared strategies with social, economic, community, cultural and environmental outcomes.



*“Provide opportunities, involve everyone and art can be a positive for the community.”*

*“Using the arts to bring community together and foster greater representation of marginal groups... Greater visibility is a great step to greater community connectedness. This also gives the rest of the community an opportunity to consider broader perspectives and experiences.”*



*Pottery class at Wyreena Community Arts Centre.*

## Key directions:

- 1.1 Offer low-cost and accessible participatory arts and experiential opportunities, supporting enhanced mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as surprising, challenging and high-quality contemporary arts opportunities to engage community members of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- 1.2 Continue to strengthen partnerships and develop targeted arts engagement strategies for identified population groups.
- 1.3 Contribute to community connectedness through support for inter-generational and inter-cultural activities and projects.
- 1.4 Deliver innovative cross-disciplinary, signature projects for specific needs of key population groups.
- 1.5 Work in partnership with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place on Indigenous-led arts projects which engage and connect the community and support First Nations artists.
- 1.6 Deliver innovative projects and exhibitions that explore issues, interests and values of importance to the Maroondah community such as the environment and cultural heritage.
- 1.7 Facilitate greater connections between arts and cultural initiatives and directions across Council including between Karralyka and Wyreena Community Arts Centre and other arts programming.
- 1.8 Integrate public art into infrastructure for families and children across Maroondah.
- 1.9 Provide surprising and engaging arts activities and events across the community such as pop up events and ephemeral art in public spaces, open spaces and the natural environment.
- 1.10 Investigate opportunities to promote and deliver free, low cost and accessible activities, and night-time and weekend activities.
- 1.11 Encourage and provide advice to external arts and community groups, schools and arts organisations.



*Giant Puppets of Maroondah in Ringwood Town Square. Created by Snuff Puppets and VCAL students from Swinburne University.*

## Theme 2: Vibrant places and spaces

*Creative Placemaking can be used by communities to engage residents locally, enhance public space and contribute to healthy sustainable communities...The success of creative placemaking is dependent upon collaborations between various civic stakeholders such as governments, private investment, not-for-profit organisations, artists and citizen groups. As part of this process, partnerships and shared leadership are crucial to build momentum and harness the power of the arts to heighten quality of life and revitalise buildings, neighbourhoods and cities.*

<http://www.artscapediy.org/Creative-Placemaking/Approaches-to-Creative-Placemaking.aspx>

### Our stakeholders said

Feedback about vibrant places and spaces remains strong, with a clear emphasis on including outdoor spaces, such as bushland and waterways, as well as playgrounds and open spaces. Our community's suggestions for vibrant places and spaces are now informed by the experience of the Ringwood arts precinct. There is a desire to further this approach within the Ringwood Activity Centre and extend it to other activity centres across Maroondah. There is also a strong theme around improving spaces, such as empty shops, unused commercial spaces, highways, shopping centres and derelict public places.

*"There is an opportunity to... create surprise art... The community enrichment and connectivity created by the Long View Road Cockatoos was extraordinary. People gathered to admire, talk it over, introduce themselves to neighbours and be street proud. It also enriched the lives of students being driven past and many walkers who do the Walter Burley Estate walk as part of their general exercise."*



Ringwood Urban Art Tour.

*“I wanted to share how much I value the exhibitions and occasional live music at Realm. It is great to see music and exhibitions enjoyed by people from a range of generations and age groups. I’m not at a stage of life where I have time/energy to seek out local cultural opportunities, but I greatly value having experiences available that are linked to places I go each week such as shops and the library.”*

## Key directions

- 2.1 Further develop existing key exhibition, performance and arts programming facilities at Wyreena Community Arts Centre and at Karralyka Centre while providing ongoing support for established facilities such as Maroondah Federation Estate and Realm.
- 2.2 Explore opportunities to ensure that the Croydon Community Precinct and adjacent areas including Tarralla Creek include facilities and a programming model which celebrates cultural heritage and supports arts and cultural activation.
- 2.3 Further develop temporary and permanent public art along Maroondah Highway and within the Ringwood arts precinct.
- 2.4 Incorporate public art and creative elements into key infrastructure developments such as public transport infrastructure and multi-level car parks across Maroondah.
- 2.5 Develop arts and cultural strategies as part of a creative placemaking approach across the municipality including the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre and Croydon Activity Centre, as well as neighbourhoods and specific locations in need of revitalisation or regeneration.
- 2.6 Seek funding opportunities and partnerships to support activation of empty spaces and regeneration of disused and derelict spaces.
- 2.7 Develop and extend the arts trail strategy – including Maroondah Art Trail and the Ringwood Urban Art Tour, and introduce a Croydon public art and heritage trail to promote local artists and showcase the unique character of areas within Maroondah, their communities and heritage.
- 2.8 Support temporary and pop-up installations, performances and events which can transform and add vitality to places and spaces across Maroondah.
- 2.9 Increase opportunities for a diverse range of work by local arts groups and artists to be displayed across Council facilities and in activity centres.
- 2.10 Investigate opportunities to promote and deliver free, low cost and accessible activities, and night-time and weekend activities.



*Out of the Wood features a series of mythical beasts in an imagined landscape of colourful patterns. Created by Carla Gottgens with young people from ArtScape, EACH.*

## Theme 3: A city that is creative, flourishing and values the arts

*A culturally rich and vibrant community is one in which its members regularly express their own culture by making new art; and through their engagement with cultural activity, experience aesthetic enrichment, gain new knowledge, ideas and insights, come to appreciate the diversity and difference of human expression, and feel a connection to a heritage they share with others, from the past, through the present and into the future.*

<https://culturaldevelopment.net.au/policy-domains/cultural-domain-description/>

### Our stakeholders said

There is overarching support for the arts as an integral element of life in Maroondah. Arts and culture are recognised for their social, economic and environmental contributions and benefits.

Our stakeholders recognise this and emphasise the importance of facilitating and supporting the following conditions to create a flourishing local arts and cultural ecosystem:

- connecting to and working with local communities, their values and creative practice
- providing access to creative experiences and services
- supporting individual arts practice and creative industries
- liaising and creating links across community, government and business sectors

- creating and stimulating creative excellence through commissions and curated exhibits and experiences
- connecting local arts and cultural activity to the wider creative ecosystem.

*“There are opportunities for Maroondah to think bigger so that it encourages artists and creatives to see Maroondah as the place to live, with the facilities to pursue their passions.”*

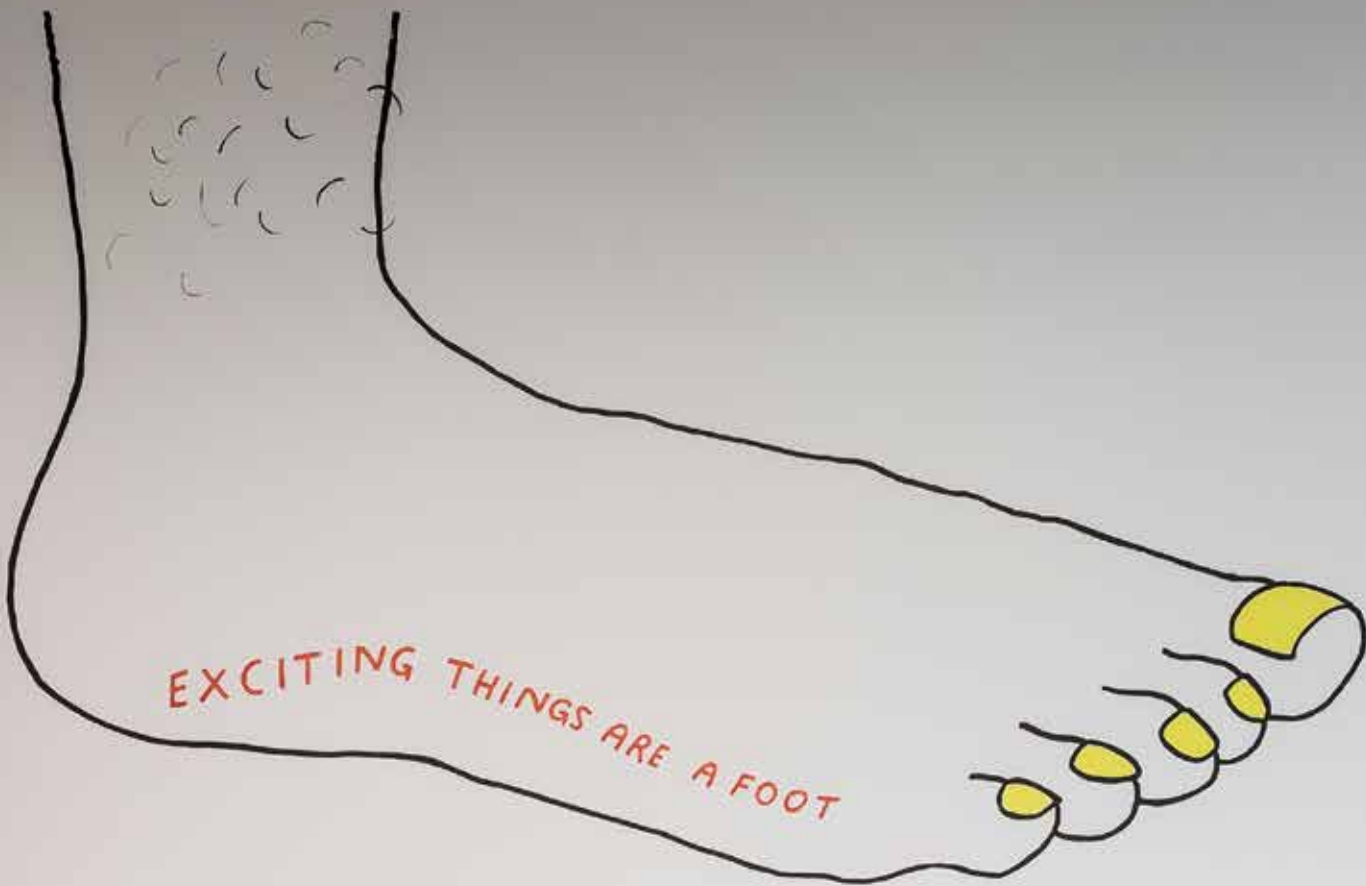
*“I love being part of a community where art is valued, where I can take my children to see live music and participate in interactive activities. Maroondah is already well on the way to bringing all walks of life together through arts and culture... we have so much available and beautiful facilities.”*



*Sounding Stories, an interactive installation created for ArtSpace at Realm, by Playable Streets with children from communities from Burma.*

## Key directions

- 3.1 Support arts practice in Maroondah through providing opportunities for exhibiting and presenting, through affordable access to studio and rehearsal spaces, and through arts and cultural grants.
- 3.2 Support, promote and showcase leading, innovative and excellent creative practice through curated exhibitions and performance opportunities and through recognising and celebrating outstanding achievements.
- 3.3 Support the growth and sustainability of Maroondah’s creative industries through targeted approaches including mentoring and skills development.
- 3.4 Explore potential partnerships with Maroondah-based business support programs and with other eastern Metropolitan region councils in order to stimulate, connect and promote local creative industries.
- 3.5 Build a greater understanding of the visitor economy in Maroondah to inform the development of potential key cultural attractions and to strengthen effective marketing for the arts in Maroondah.
- 3.6 Explore the potential to attract creative industries to the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre, including privately owned land, such as Midway Arcade and within new private developments.
- 3.7 Lead and facilitate a forum to bring together all levels of the local creative ecosystem to share information, strengthen connections and stimulate opportunities and build sustainability.
- 3.8 Support a wide diversity of arts practice and creative industries in Maroondah, including music through supporting community music and choirs, professional musicians and promoting live music in Maroondah.
- 3.9 Develop programming and promotional links between locally based arts product and broader metropolitan festivals and arts initiatives.
- 3.10 Support and connect Maroondah’s artists through mentoring and creative development opportunities to link emerging and established artists.
- 3.11 Undertake an audit of local performing arts groups and identify needs and opportunities for increased access to creative spaces for rehearsal, production and presentation including within the Croydon Community Precinct.
- 3.12 Explore opportunities to support the development of community-based arts production skills and capacity development for local arts groups at Karralyka Centre.
- 3.13 Strengthen marketing strategies for the arts in Maroondah and Ringwood arts precinct to increase awareness of arts and cultural opportunities, programs and activities.
- 3.14 Continue to build and promote opportunities to showcase and promote Maroondah’s creativity and arts achievements.
- 3.15 Increase opportunities for public access and engagement with the Maroondah City Council Art Collection including through digital technologies and public display.



EXCITING THINGS ARE A FOOT



SAUCE



SAUCER



SLEEPING BAGS

## Credits and acknowledgements

**Cover:** Music in the Backyard presented in 2017 by Urban Life with the support of Eastland and Maroondah City Council's Arts and Cultural Grants Scheme. Background mural: *Strong Sistas*, a portrait of women from Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place by 23rd Key, 2016. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Inside front cover:** Smoking Ceremony at Reconciliation Week 2019, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place. The annual Reconciliation Week event is presented in partnership between Maroondah City Council, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and Maroondah Movement for Reconciliation.

**Page 4:** BeBlocks, Liquid Skin, performed as part of the Community Stations Pilot Project at Ringwood Station in 2017. Supported by Public Transport Victoria and in partnership with the TrackSAFE Foundation, University of Melbourne, Metro, and V/Line. Photo: Bryony Jackson.

**Page 8:** Cyclo Illuminato by Thomas and Wells, Ringwood Town Square, 2018. A Ringwood arts precinct project supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and Eastland. Photo: Bryony Jackson.

**Page 10:** Models created by Isobel Knowles and Van Sowerwine for virtual reality film *Passenger*. Presented as part of the survey exhibition 'Take me with you'. ArtSpace at Realm, 2020. Photo: Andrew Curtis

**Page 11:** 'Of Earth and Fire' exhibition at Maroondah Federation Estate 2019, featured works from the Maroondah City Council Art Collection.

**Page 12:** Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos, carved acacia stump in Croydon South by Rob Bast, 2018.

**Page 13:** Halloween event at Wyreena Community Arts Centre, presented in partnership with True Fairies, 2019. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Page 14:** Maroondah Symphony Orchestra led by conductor Willem van der Vis, 2018. Supported by Maroondah City Council's Arts and Cultural Grants Scheme. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Page 15:** Wyreena Community Arts Centre. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Page 16:** Community workshop by Lynda Roberts and Ceri Hann as part of the ArtSpace at Realm exhibition 'Out of Viewfinder', 2019. Photo: Andrew Curtis.

**Page 19:** 'Bamboo Village' was a Ringwood arts precinct project in partnership with Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) and supported by Eastland and the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. Presented in ArtSpace at Realm, 2017. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Page 20:** Weaving workshop with Auntie Irene Norman. Held on International Women's Day as part of The Backyard in March, a Ringwood arts precinct project with Urban Life, Fresh Theatre and Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place. Supported by Eastland and Maroondah City Council's Arts and Cultural Grants Scheme, 2020. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Page 22:** 'The Fruit Thief' mural by Roger Archbold and Andy Drewitt, 2018. Commissioned by Croydon Main Street Traders Association supported by Maroondah City Council Arts and Cultural Grants Scheme. Photo: Roger Archbold.

**Page 23:** Pottery class at Wyreena Community Arts Centre. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Page 24:** The Giant Puppets of Maroondah were created as part of a Ringwood arts precinct project in 2018. Supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. Photo: Bryony Jackson.

**Page 25:** Ringwood Urban Art Tour is presented in partnership with Eastland.

**Page 26:** 'Out of the Wood' was created at Ringwood Station by Carla Gottgens and young people from ArtScape, EACH, in 2016. The ArtScape program supports young people with mental health issues. The project was funded by PTV and supported by VicRoads.

**Page 27:** 'Sounding Stories', an interactive installation created by Playable Streets in ArtSpace at Realm, with children from communities from Burma, 2017. A Ringwood arts precinct project developed in partnership with Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne). Supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. Photo: Andy Drewitt.

**Inside back cover:** 'Something exciting is afoot' by Kenny Pittock painted as part of the ArtSpace exhibition 'Monuments to the Everyday' in 2018. Photo: Andrew Curtis.

*Opposite: 'Something exciting is afoot', Kenny Pittock's temporary mural on the ground floor of Realm.*

**To contact Council**






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