

OUR PLACES • OUR PEOPLE • OUR STORIES

OUR CULTURE

CITY OF LAUNCESTON CULTURAL STRATEGY 2020 – 2030



A CITY OF LAUNCESTON INITIATIVE



City of
LAUNCESTON

SUPPORTED BY THE LAUNCESTON CITY DEAL



• Riverbend Park mural by Judith-Rose Thomas and Nanette Shaw IMAGE Rob Burnett



WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE ELDERS OF THE TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE -
PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING -
AND CELEBRATE THE HISTORY AND CREATIVITY
OF ALL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES.



MAYOR'S FOREWORD

We love our beautiful City. I genuinely believe it is one of the best regional cities in the world.

And for those of us lucky enough to call Launceston home, it is a place we are proud of and feel a great connection to.

It is a place of nature, of heritage and easy living.

Visitors passing through are struck by its architectural treasures and places of great natural beauty. City living with a country heartbeat – invigorated by the wineries, farms and bushland surrounding us and supported by local businesses.

But what is it that generates this connection? It is more than just a collection of buildings and proximity to agriculture, nature and industry. It is our culture – our people and our stories – that make this place unique.

So why do we need a Cultural Strategy as a Local Government body? Why not concentrate on the traditional roads, rates and rubbish and let the City's culture be what it is?

Simply because Local Government does operate in the cultural realm. Its planning decisions, where it directs its resources, almost every decision it makes has an impact on the culture of the City. Further, the Council owns and maintains important cultural assets such as historic buildings, theatres, stadiums and supports a vibrant events scene which all contribute to the culture of our great City.

This strategy brings to the fore that engagement with cultural activity and enables the City of Launceston to act consciously in the cultural policy area – acknowledging its importance alongside Economic, Social and Environmental policy areas. It aligns the organisation with work being undertaken at a national and international level and positions the City to make the most of our cultural opportunities to support the sustainability of our way of life.

We release the strategy at an exciting time for the City culturally. The University of Tasmania development at Inveresk, the co-location with QVMAG, the My Place



My Future Plan in the Northern Suburbs and the many projects being implemented under the Launceston City Deal create a dynamic environment with many opportunities to create a culturally vital City.

The focus of the strategy has been distilled from many conversations with the community over a number of years. From surveys asking what culture means to you, to extensive one-on-one conversations with a range of cultural stakeholders – this strategy is filled with the voices of the people who make Launceston's culture what it is.

We thank you for your engagement and your contribution.

I would also like to acknowledge the significant bodies of work that preceded this Cultural Strategy - namely Robyn Archer for her significant contribution and Hirst Projects for their feasibility study in 2018.

This strategy is adopted whilst the City is in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, with its associated health risks, economic impact and social isolation having a profound impact on our lives. Never has the importance of our cultural lives been drawn into a sharper focus - both in terms of the elements of our lives that we miss and the way our cultural life has helped us to survive such difficult times. It is timely then that we will have this strategy in place to provide the vision and the focus to help us rebuild and recover even better than before.

The City of Launceston thanks you for your interest and looks forward to working with you to build a culturally vital and welcoming City.

Albert van Zetten
MAYOR OF LAUNCESTON



PURPOSE of the STRATEGY

- To articulate the cultural strengths of Launceston.
- To inspire and motivate Launceston's people and organisations to build on these strengths in order to increase the resilience, well-being, economic and cultural vitality of the community.
- To express the essential role of cultural vitality in planning for Greater Launceston's future.
- To assert the Council's commitment to cultural development as a means of creating a dynamic, healthy and sustainable society.
- To make explicit the relationship between delivering cultural outcomes and the Greater Launceston Plan Community Vision.



An aerial photograph of a wide, fast-moving river with white water rapids, winding through a dense, lush green forest. The river flows from the upper left towards the lower right. The surrounding forest is thick with various types of trees, including some taller, thinner trees on the hillsides. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

OUR
CULTURAL
CONTEXT



CRAFT BEER

HANDCRAFTED BEER
BORN & RAISED IN BYRON BAY



IMAGE Chris Crerar

OUR PEOPLE

The people of Launceston, like any great city, hail from diverse backgrounds and bring a range of experiences, needs and ambitions with them. They may be passing through or they may have generations of connection with this place. They all make a significant contribution to the culture of Launceston.

Thousands of generations of Aboriginal people have lived in what we now call the Tamar Valley. Despite the generational impacts of colonisation, the Aboriginal descendants of these people go from strength to strength; connecting with the land, the estuary and the rivers; continuing cultural practices and reclaiming their languages.

Our volunteers are our lifeblood. They build and sustain the many communities which enable society to function. Our football clubs, our neighbourhood houses, our arts organisations, our landcare groups, our charities, our environmental organisations and innumerable other sports, leisure, special interest, community support, and multicultural organisations – all depend on the generosity and commitment of individuals who give their time, their skills, their comfort and their care. They make it possible for this society to function and manifest the diverse cultural mosaic that makes Launceston what it is.

Our young people have more opportunities for connection with the world and each other than any generation before them. This comes with challenges; they can be more exposed and potentially more vulnerable. However, they relish the opportunities that a networked world always accessible from their phones and devices provides. They share the lead in their acceptance of diversity. They are agile in their thinking and passionate in their ideals. Their understanding of the networked world means that they have a growing voice and they are unafraid to confront leaders and decision-makers regarding the issues associated with their communities and world, particularly when the impact of those decisions will have the greatest implication for them and their generation.

There is a great appetite for participation in arts and cultural activities in the City of Launceston. Many organisations provide opportunities for training and participation in visual and performing arts and they are taken up with gusto. Audiences respond in like terms, regularly selling out seasons at our theatres of both amateur and professional shows. There is also a strong design culture which is reflected in a vibrant population of makers, a strong object art culture, the numerous and popular art and craft fairs and high attendance at our galleries.

Many professional and independent companies and artists choose to make Launceston home too. Some have decades-long practice histories; others are newly emerging. They enrich our cultural landscape by engaging in important cultural conversations locally, nationally and internationally and include every visual and performing arts discipline. They include individual artists, independent arts cooperatives and funded companies with a national profile. Collectively they create a voice which is uniquely of this place, reflecting our stories back to us and taking them to the world.

There is a long history of migrant populations settling in Launceston. Migrant populations from many cultures arrived in search of a new life and made a home here. They have contributed to the creation of one of the most successful multicultural nations in the world. Newly arrived migrants bring new stories, experience and cultural practice – adding to the diversity and cultural richness of our society.

OUR PLACES

Places are a significant contributor to a culturally vital life. We map our lives through a connection to the places that have significance to us. They connect us to our past, to memories and stories, and help us to recognise and acknowledge the changes occurring in the world and in ourselves. How many generations of young people have clambered up these rocks to launch themselves into the waters of the Gorge? How long ago was it that we strutted the stage we now watch our children and grandchildren perform on? Who were we with the last time we watched a game at York Park? Places are formed by a connection to people - they shape and are shaped by the people that create them.

Launceston's environmental treasures certainly shape the culture of the City. The kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary, Cataract Gorge and the surrounding bushland connect visitors and the people of Launceston to the deep history of this continent, and all are within walking distance of the centre of the City. Launceston also provides the perfect launching point to World Heritage-listed mountain ranges and the rugged coastlines of the north of Tasmania.

Much of our architectural history is well preserved and eloquently speaks to our history as Australia's third oldest City. Our heritage buildings, scenic views and the character of our neighbourhoods shape the way that we live in the City and are a source of great civic pride and passion.

Our parks and gardens also play a central role in the creation of our culture. They are a highly valued element of daily life; places to gather and celebrate milestones with family and friends, immerse in nature, exercise or just as breathing space. They also play host to many of our major cultural festivals and events.

The City's cultural infrastructure supports the enrichment of our lives. As venues for daily or weekly rituals or for celebratory outings, we visit and revisit these places.

They punctuate the everyday and grow in significance every time we visit. Our theatres, museums and galleries; our sporting venues and leisure centres; our town halls, libraries and cinemas – all places that host significant moments that help to make us who we are.

The education infrastructure of Launceston shapes the City's culture significantly. Pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions all contribute to the rhythms of Launceston, and students and their families energise and invigorate the streets. The Inveresk development and initiatives across the City have great potential to enhance the position of Launceston as a University City, along with the cultural and economic benefits that flow from that, and to support a truly lifelong approach to learning.

The Greater Launceston area¹ is long renowned for its agricultural and winemaking prowess. The food and wines created here provide a bedrock for a gastronomic culture which grows year-upon-year – with local markets, restaurants and festivals proudly utilising and proclaiming the local produce. It helps to shape the character of the regions that support these activities – its heritage honoured and preserved by many historical societies – and contributes to the unique story of the villages in the Greater Launceston area.





OUR STORIES

Our culture is built on our stories. They speak to us of what is unique and special about where we are and who we are. They connect us to the past and inspire us to dream – to create our own story.

We have much to learn from the local Aboriginal story. The reclaiming of language, a deep knowledge of Country and ongoing cultural practices will make a significant contribution to our understanding of who we are as Australians when as a broader community we accept, acknowledge and learn from them. We acknowledge that we are at the beginning of this journey, and that the time is now for us to reckon with the past and engage in a process of truth telling.

This includes the stories that can be difficult to confront – including the dark days of the Frontier Wars, the horrors of the Black Line and our convict history. As we look for opportunities to tell these parts of our history and find out more about the stories from all perspectives, we build understanding and respect between cultures and walk together into a new future.

Entrepreneurship is a big part of Launceston's stories. Our region has a long history of firsts – in public infrastructure, medicine, politics, business and sport. These stories are fascinating to visitors and residents alike and build a positive forward-looking foundation for us to tap into and be inspired by.

Our migrant communities bring with them a rich cultural history – some have lived here for a long time; others are more recently arrived. The stories they bring with them enrich this place – their traditions, their food and their desire to build a new home helps to shape the strong multi-cultural society of Australia.



• Courtney Barnett, Mona Foma 2019 IMAGE MONA/Rémi Chauvin. Courtesy of the artist and MONA Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

OUR FESTIVALS & EVENTS

There is never a shortage of things to do and see in Launceston and its surrounding regions. Our calendar is filled with festivals and events which draw on the cultural strengths of our people, places and stories.

Our food and beverage strengths feature strongly at all events and by themselves create the focus of gatherings which draw together thousands of people locally and from much further afield.

Our strong connection to the arts is also much celebrated. Festivals provide contexts to share our stories - through music, dance and theatre - and to continue to build our understanding of who we are and what is important to us. Knowing someone's story builds empathy, understanding and connection.

From footy to fun-runs - sporting events often include a strong element of participation. They are a part of our everyday life, filling it with meaning and shared experiences - also contributing significantly to our mental and physical health and well-being.

Most importantly, they give us a reason to come together. Culture is built on human interaction and our festivals and events provide opportunities to break from our routines and experience our cultural riches with those we love. They nourish our creativity and provide experiences which inspire and excite us. They can bring us together with people with whom we share very specific passions - or throw us into situations which reveal new ideas and expose us to things we never would otherwise have experienced or imagined.

OUR MAJOR CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES





CITY OF LEARNING

Launceston is a City in transition. Working across three levels of government and in partnership with local agencies, community and businesses, the Launceston City Deal will position Launceston as one of Australia's most liveable and innovative regional cities.

A significant contributor to realising this vision is the unique opportunities that the primary, secondary and post-educational institutions bring, and in particular the partnership with the University of Tasmania.

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA - INVERESK AND NEWNHAM DEVELOPMENT

The University of Tasmania, Northern Transformation project will create a university City that provides significant educational, research and cultural opportunities for collaboration.

The City and the University are committed to a deep partnership to maximise the educational, teaching and research opportunities to create a public space and activities at Inveresk and in the City that are connected, and educationally and culturally rich. Partnering with the University of Tasmania provides the interdisciplinary connection with students, academics, researchers, and community that encompasses the sciences and technology, through to the social sciences, humanities and creative arts and focuses on innovation and creativity. The partnership provides a platform for designers, creative

artists, technologists, and those working in industry and policy to debate, learn and share ideas as well as provide an environment for creative thinking, production and new research.

For the Northern Suburbs, there will be opportunities to consider how best to utilise and re-purpose the Newnham Campus, particularly to align with the implementation of the My Place My Future Plan.

“

In partnership with QVMAG, the redevelopment of the Inveresk precinct gives us an unprecedented opportunity for place-based learning celebrating local history, environment, culture, and community.

”

PROFESSOR DOMINIC GERAGHTY,
PRO VICE CHANCELLOR, UTAS LAUNCESTON

“

Having a University for a next-door-neighbour is one of the most exciting things that could happen for QVMAG. We have a wonderful opportunity to partner on research, share knowledge, and explore new approaches to object-based learning.

”

GENERAL MANAGER,
CREATIVE ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES, CITY OF LAUNCESTON

CREATIVE LEARNING AND MONA FOMA

Mona Foma's iconic summer festival of music and art takes place in key Launceston sites each January for a week of incredible community activations, performances and installations. The festival partners with the Council, University of Tasmania, schools and community to engage and inspire lifelong creative learning. In 2019, Mona Foma and Hobart's Terrapin presented a spectacular co-production of King Ubu. Adapted by Willoh SWeiland from Alfred Jarry's 1896 play, and with musical direction by Brian Ritchie, King Ubu featured giant puppets, and was staged in the natural amphitheatre of Cataract Gorge. University of Tasmania students and recent graduates worked alongside professional actors in featured roles, performing with a large cast of school students and community performance groups. They also worked in various production roles supporting every element of the presentation.

King Ubu is just one example of what makes Launceston's creative arts scene so unique, with opportunities for creatives of all ages and skill levels to gain technical and performance skills through industry-leading productions and festivals.



◦ Calculating Infinity at QVMAG IMAGE Anjie Blair

THE QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

As the largest cultural institution in the region QVMAG has a central role to play in the delivery of the vision of this strategy.

By focusing on its unique collections, stories, and research, QVMAG will position itself as a Centre of Excellence for Northern Tasmania. When considered together with other cultural offers throughout in Tasmania, the State proposition is a comprehensive and powerful one. QVMAG has many collections of national and international research significance, and partnering with UTAS will enable QVMAG to maximise this.

In order to make this step change, QVMAG's most pressing priorities are:

- Auditing its collections and standardising collection data in readiness for digitisation, in order to reach the widest possible audiences.
- Audience segmentation and concept redevelopment work to ensure that the stories told are powerful, relevant, and resonate with a range of audiences, in different ways.
- In alignment with the conceptual redevelopment of the museum, a masterplan to ensure that the museum's spaces are part of a logical visitor flow and overall narrative, that they align with UTAS's spaces and traffic flows, and are fit-for-purpose. Whilst the use of heritage-listed buildings at both its Royal Park and Inveresk campuses adds to QVMAG's story and enables ongoing public engagement with these important pieces of cultural infrastructure, these buildings do not always provide ideal conditions for the operations of a modern museum or gallery.
- Governance – to make best use of its assets and opportunities QVMAG will need to adopt best-practice principles in its governance and operations. As a part of the organisational restructure of the City of Launceston in 2019 it was acknowledged that its position as a Council-operated facility potentially restricts the flexibility and dynamic operations required of a cultural institution of its size and significance, and is therefore in need of review.

COLLECTION AUDIT

QVMAG has committed to undertake a thorough audit of its entire collection including Visual Arts and Design, Natural Sciences and History in order to create an ongoing digitised record, and to ensure that our collections are as accessible as possible.

This is the first full audit of these collections since the museum's inception in 1891.

Until the start of this audit, approximately 18% of objects were registered on our database. We recognise the need for every single item in QVMAG's collection - from tiny native fleas to expansive landscape paintings to railway carriages - to be meticulously assessed and documented for present and future communities to treasure and learn from. Because, ultimately, a museum holds a record of the past and present for the future and we must preserve this as best we can.

The audit is uncovering marvelous objects of cultural, social and environmental significance that are stitching together inspiring and intriguing new narratives. We are gaining new knowledge every day and this is informing and shaping our own work and practice.



◦ Rocherlea Community Garden IMAGE Chris Crerar

DEMOGRAPHICS - A STATIC AND AGING POPULATION

The population of Launceston is predicted to stagnate without government intervention, numbers of people of working age are expected to decline and there is a trend towards the aging of the population.²

Of course, older members of our community make an important contribution to our community and our culture. They are significant contributors to the volunteer labour that literally keeps society functioning, they often have the time and the interest to invest in cultural activities and many have the financial capacity to make significant contributions to cultural activities. However, an aging population does have implications for the economic viability of the region. A strong cultural environment can help to stimulate population and economic growth, creating and enhancing employment opportunities and career pathways.

It achieves this in a number of ways:

- A culturally vital community is an attractive place to establish and grow innovative businesses, and build Launceston's brand as a place of effortless living and classic culture.
- Enhancing its cultural vitality will make the region a more attractive place to settle and raise a family.
- Welcoming, enabling and strengthening the participation and growth of our diverse communities - particularly more recent arrivals.



• Launceston's School Strike 4 Climate, Prince's Square 2019 IMAGE Nick Hanson Visuals

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The City of Launceston has acknowledged the necessity of urgent action to address the impacts of climate change by declaring a climate emergency.

Climate change has a number of implications for the cultural life of the region, and by taking this step Council positions itself to reduce its contribution by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate the potential negative effects already in train and make the most of the opportunities it presents. The cultural implications include:

- Launceston's seasonal climate is attractive to many people experiencing the effects of climate change in many major population centres on the mainland – this

opens up an opportunity to attract businesses and working-age people.

- Our cultural institutions can play a leading role in raising awareness of environmental change and sustainability and helping to build community resilience. A culturally vital community is a more resilient community. This can help to prepare for, respond to and recover from severe weather-related emergencies – particularly floods and bushfires.



• Riverbend Park | IMAGE Rob Burnett

THE LAUNCESTON CITY DEAL

The Launceston City Deal ensures a coordinated approach across all levels of government to investment in the region. Its vision is to ensure that by 2022, Launceston will be one of Australia's most liveable and innovative regional cities.

This strategy is one of the deliverables of the City Deal, recognising the important role that culture will play in achieving the vision. The City Deal Commitment states:

The strategy will strengthen community pride and belonging. It will leverage Launceston's rich cultural assets - including its status as Australia's third

oldest city, its Aboriginal heritage and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery - to increase local engagement in cultural activities and promote Launceston as a year-round cultural tourism destination.



IMAGE Chris Crerar

MY PLACE MY FUTURE - REINVIGORATION OF THE NORTHERN SUBURBS

The My Place My Future Plan is also a key commitment under the Launceston City Deal.

This Plan outlines a strategy to drive the revitalisation of Launceston's Northern Suburbs, an area that represents approximately one third of the population within the Launceston municipality. The My Place My Future Plan was launched in 2019 and among other strategic areas, acknowledges the cultural richness and many community assets of this area – as well as addressing some of the perceived and actual disadvantages experienced by this community.

A FOCUS ON FOOD

From our surrounding farming and viticultural communities; to the many vibrant markets and high quality makers; and a thriving hotel, café and restaurant scene, Launceston is steeped in a culture of food.

Food is the focus of many cultural exchanges: the artistry of chefs and vintners; the celebration of cultural diversity at our markets; the combination of music, beverages and food at our many venues and festivals; the simple act of lovingly preparing a meal for our family and friends. This is the bubbling centre of our culture - our food and our community are intrinsically linked and the foundation of a vital culture. Tapping into this energetic sector and supporting its organic and integrated nature will provide many opportunities for a thriving cultural life.



• Design Tasmania IMAGE Rob Burnett

CULTURAL TOURISM

Traditional cultural destinations, such as museums and iconic structures, have always attracted visitors but there is now a shift as people's demand for more bespoke cultural offerings increases. This requires a rethinking of cultural and heritage tourism where the visitor wants to immerse themselves in the local culture and have that one-on-one experience. Launceston is perfectly primed to embrace this new wave of cultural tourism.

Cultural tourism is defined as trips with "the main or concomitant goal of visiting sites and events with cultural and historical value" according to the United National World Tourism organisation (UNWTO).

UNWTO estimates that more than 50% of tourists worldwide are now motivated by a desire to experience a place's cultural and heritage, and this is set to increase by 15% year-on-year. It has identified six categories that will form the foundations of cultural tourism's success:

1. Handicrafts and visual arts
2. Gastronomy and culinary
3. Social practices, rituals and festive events
4. Music and performing arts
5. Oral traditions and expressions
6. Knowledge and practices concerning nature



IMAGE Rob Burnett

CITY OF LAUNCESTON / UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA / STATE GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

The City of Launceston and University of Tasmania Cultural Working Group is a representative body of the two organisations and key stakeholders – including State Government – established to drive, support and enhance communications and engagement of the partners. Its core business will be to drive the operational elements of the Inveresk precinct.

A number of principles will guide the Working Group:

- Guided by this Cultural Strategy, generate a shared vision to inform planning and investment (next five years) and implementation (next ten years) for the Inveresk precinct.
- To capture the value of arts and culture in Launceston for the City's diverse beneficiaries and stakeholders and to use this information to embed culture in the City's and University's strategies and planning.
- Connecting the University's leading-edge research and innovation with the City's cultural sector.
- Securing a strong position to build competitive large-scale cultural investment bids for the City and the University.
- Enhanced educational and work-related learning opportunities for the community and school and university students, as well as lifelong learning.
- Develop joint programs to build employment opportunities and professional development in the cultural and tourism sectors.
- Consider Launceston's regional, national and international role and aim to develop its reputation as a cultural destination.
- Consider the role of the Council, the University and State funding bodies in supporting cultural developments.
- Ensure alignment with existing strategies within the University and Council including the UTAS Inveresk Masterplan and the regional and city-based economic development strategies.
- It is expected that the Working Group will consider sustainable cultural programmes and make recommendations about the appropriate cultural infrastructure (physical and human) to support the objectives and vision identified.



• *Incubation* (detail) 2014, by Brain Foetus

CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The development of the Cultural Strategy presents the City with a unique opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity. We hear from our minority communities that social acceptance and tolerance can be a challenge - however, we want Launceston to be known as a City that is welcoming and recognises the benefits in differences. The Cultural Strategy provides the City with the perfect vehicle to lead this shift.

PUBLIC ART

There are many opportunities to support a culturally vital City through public art. It can be used to tell our stories, build ownership of place and assist with wayfinding through the City. It contributes to a City which is more dynamic and enriched for residents and visitors and can enable people to re-think their relationship with a place or their position on a particular issue.



An aerial photograph of a park. In the center, there is a yellow building with a white roof and a blue stripe. The building has a curved front and several windows. To the left of the building is a paved path that leads to a small, ornate structure. To the right of the building is another paved path that leads to a large, curved stone structure. The park is filled with green grass, trees, and winding paths. The lighting suggests it is daytime, with shadows cast by the trees and the building.

DEFINING CULTURE

In order to articulate and implement a cultural strategy, we need to have a shared understanding of some of the key terms. This section captures what we mean when we talk about culture, art and placemaking.



1890
INGLES

WALKERS FLOWERS

OPTICAL

WORTHINGTON



WHAT IS CULTURE?

Is culture a way of talking about artistic expression? Or is it about the shared ideas, values, and customs of a particular group of people?

In the 2018 survey 'Launceston's connection to culture', respondents expressed a sophisticated understanding of culture. It encompassed both of these positions and demonstrated a strong desire to build an active and vibrant community by supporting and promoting cultural initiatives. This includes a commitment to education and life-long learning for all people.

This Cultural Strategy is people centred. It positions culture as a product of human engagement and interaction.

Culture springs, first and foremost from human interaction... making culture is a daily public event – not just in schools, in the media, in the 'culture houses', but also in the streets, shops, trains and cafes; ... **Culture is not a pile of artefacts – it is us; the living breathing sum of us.**³

Cultural development in this strategy is the pursuit of cultural vitality. John Hawkes, in his book 'The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Cultures Essential Role in Public Planning' describes the manifestations of cultural vitality as:

... robust diversity, tolerant cohesiveness, multi-dimensional egalitarianism, compassionate inclusivity, energetic creativity, open minded curiosity, confident independence, rude health. Attributes such as these will help us make a future our children will thank us for.⁴

This strategy articulates the role of cultural vitality in building a sustainable future, positioning it alongside economic growth, social inclusion and environmental balance as an equally important policy domain for the City of Launceston.

HOW DO THE ARTS CONTRIBUTE TO CULTURE?

The arts are an essential expression of culture. From the finger painting on the fridge to an Ellen Payne woodcarving. From skipping down the path to a Graeme Murphy choreography. From bedtime stories to a Margaret Scott poem.

The arts help us to appreciate our world by providing us with experiences outside the mundane – of enjoyment and entertainment as well as beauty, awe, joy and wonder. They help us to understand our world through education and inspiration. They fuel our desire for connection with others.

Our artists are our story keepers. Their works capture time, helping us to understand who we were, how we became who we are and who we could become.

Our artists are our change instigators. They speak the unspeakable and appeal to our better selves.

They energise and articulate important social reforms.

The arts... remain... the paramount symbolic language through which shifting meanings are presented.⁵

In a world overloaded with information, where ideas are expressed as sound bites and our emotions are used as levers for increased sales, the arts enable us to distill meaning from this chaos.





IMAGE Chris Crerar

WHY IS PLACEMAKING IMPORTANT?

Placemaking is a multifaceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces which aims to create places that promote people's health, happiness and well-being. Placemaking focuses on the physical, cultural and social identities of a place.

... placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximise shared value.⁶

Importantly, pursuing the visions of the Cultural Strategy will enhance Council's role in the ongoing activation and management of place. With its integrated framework embedding a cycle of evaluation and renewal, it will enable Council to respond appropriately and promptly to issues in the community.

When people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds can not only access and enjoy a place, but also play a key role in its identity, creation, and maintenance, that is when we see genuine placemaking in action.⁷

This strategy – operating in a placemaking framework – enables and encourages the community to lead the conversation and supports them to create places which respond to the needs of the people that use them.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Since the early 2000s there has been an international movement to position Culture alongside Social, Economic and Environmental policy domains for cities and local governments – acknowledging its essential role in the development of a vibrant and sustainable society.

Nationally this movement has been led by the Cultural Development Network through detailed research and their stewardship of the National Local Government Cultural Forum. This forum developed a number of tools for cultural planning in a local government context including a Cultural Planning Framework and a Schema of Cultural Outcomes⁹.

This best-practice model is adopted by this strategy and delivers a number of key advantages:

- It provides a language for the discussion of cultural activity and its outcomes which will improve communications between local governments and their state and federal counterparts.
- Council's engagement with the cultural community will be improved by using the language of cultural outcomes in key policy documents and grant-making initiatives.
- It brings Council's cultural planning into line with the growing requirement at all levels of government to express the results of investment in terms of outcomes (the impact in the community) rather than just outputs (what was done with the investment).

OUR VISION



Launceston is a dynamic place where people live meaningful and culturally vital lives; filled with stimulating activities, highlighted by aesthetically rich experiences and fueled by curiosity.

This goal relates primarily to outcomes for individuals in the community – personalised experience.

RELATED OUTCOMES

● STIMULATION

This outcome is about how engagement in cultural activity stimulates the creativity, sparks the imagination or piques the curiosity of the participant (which includes all participants, from experienced artists to members of the public experiencing this creative activity for the first time). Creativity is defined here as the use of imagination or original ideas to create something new and worthwhile – the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality.

This is the most dynamic outcome, with the participant experiencing creative stimulus, which may result in desire to engage more with similar or different cultural experiences and/or inspiration to create new artworks, working either alone or with others. Desired endpoints are more creativity stimulated, leading to the potential of more new work created. Both are unlimited.



● ENRICHMENT

This outcome is about how aesthetic enrichment, from pleasure to challenge, can result from cultural engagement. Aesthetic enrichment is experienced through the senses, elicited by aesthetic qualities perceived in the artwork or experience, through properties such as harmony and form. It involves experiences outside the mundane, of beauty, awe, joy and wonder; potentially offering a sense of escape or captivation, or feelings of being moved, challenged or transcending the everyday, extending to deepest experiences of a sense of flow, or the numinous or spiritual realms.

This outcome can include enjoyment from participation in arts experiences that are familiar, known as aesthetic validation, or unfamiliar, known as aesthetic growth or challenge. This outcome recognises that cultural enrichment can also come from experiences that are not beautiful, but challenging or awe-inspiring.

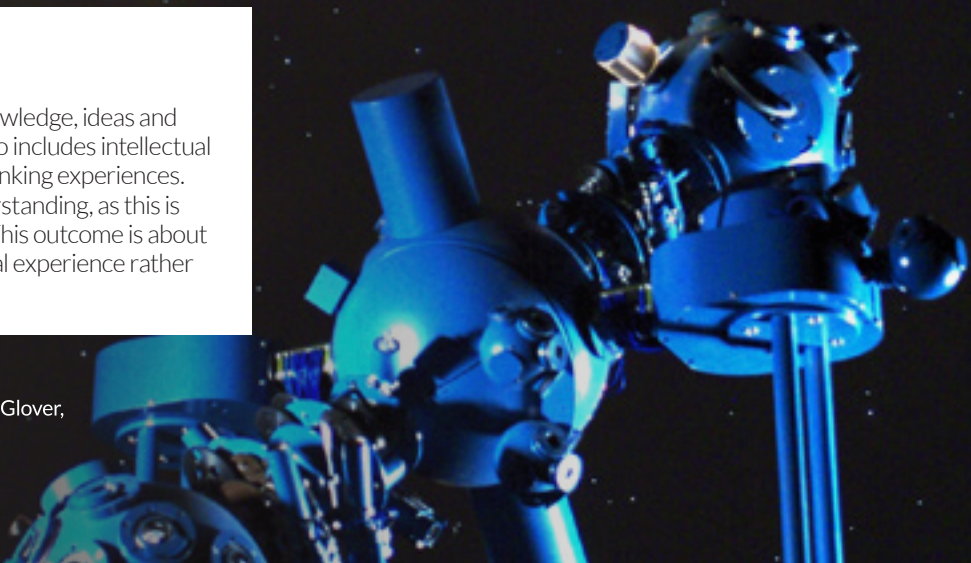


● INSIGHT

This outcome covers the development of knowledge, ideas and insights resulting from the engagement. It also includes intellectual stimulation, critical reflection and creative thinking experiences. A desired endpoint is more and deeper understanding, as this is unlimited and can be continually generated. This outcome is about the process of thinking inspired by the cultural experience rather than just the knowledge shared.

◦ ABOVE *Ruins at Paestum near Salerno (detail)* by John Glover, oil on canvas, 1835. Part of the QVMAG Collection

◦ RIGHT Launceston Planetarium IMAGE QVMAG



Launceston is a welcoming place which builds a better future by celebrating the rich cultural diversity of its people and recognising the stories of its past.

This vision relates to outcomes of the individual's engagement with community – shared experience.

RELATED OUTCOMES



● APPRECIATION

This outcome is about the appreciation of diverse and different forms of cultural expression that can result from engagement. Appreciation is defined here as the recognition or understanding of the worth, value or quality of form/s of cultural expression, including new forms of cultural expression generated when diverse cultures come together. Cultural expression is defined as the different ways that people express themselves depending on their cultural backgrounds, life experience and interests. Thus a culture might be related to ethnic, linguistic, religious or national heritage, but also through identification with others who share expressive interests, such as people who have a shared experience of disability that they seek to express, or expertise in a particular art form or type of cultural expression, such as hip-hop, emo or contemporary painting.

This is related to the contribution of this diversity to quality of life and life choices, and the way that people connect with others through this expression. The total amount or percentage of cultural diversity is not the endpoint, but the appreciation of the existing diversity, as well as appreciation of the new forms of cultural expression that are generated when diverse cultures come together.

● BELONGING

This outcome is about relationship to one's cultural history and heritage, and experience of cultural identity and values, that are shared with others. A sense of connection to the past and being part of a historical continuum; insights into the present through understanding of the past; insights into the past. This outcome is about how cultural engagement can offer illumination of the present by providing a sense of continuity with the past, and a pathway to the future. Knowing where we have come from helps us to discover where we want to go. As the past cannot be changed, the desired endpoint is a positive connection to it.



• Fully Grown 2017 IMAGE Jasper Da Seymour



• Community Kitchen IMAGE Migrant Resource Centre



• First Tasmanians, Our Story IMAGE Scott Gelston



• Pete Mattila IMAGE Emily Dimozantos 2019



IMAGE Chris Crerar

CASE STUDIES

● STOMPIN - STIMULATION

'Stompin' is a great example of a company that operates primarily to generate the outcome of Stimulation. Its focus on young people and the development of their skills as artists, technicians and administrators places them firmly in this outcome area. The stimulation outcome is clearly evidenced in the long list of company alumni that have gone on to pursue creative careers and indeed often return to the company to stimulate the creativity of new participants. In addition to this is the company's commitment to producing work in non-traditional performance spaces, often enabling access to audiences that otherwise would not have witnessed their work and inspiring them to either join the company or to produce their own creative work in alternative spaces.

● CATALYSIS - ENRICHMENT

"Catalysis" - by Pete Mattila exhibited in 2019 at Design Tasmania (in collaboration with Mona Foma) - presented accelerated insights into forged steel. Mattila's practice operates at the cutting edge of creative blacksmithing - bringing conceptual theories around deep time together with raw materials harvested direct from the landscape to result in the first known instance of truly Tasmanian steel. These elegant, functional and imposing sculptural works are a clear example of 'Enrichment' - bringing aesthetic growth and challenge to the local community.

● LEARNING SITES - INSIGHT

In partnership with the Bank of Ideas⁹, Council has developed a number of Asset Based Community Driven Effort (ABCDE) Learning Sites. The primary methods of engagement undertaken as a part of this process are great examples of the generation of the 'Insight' outcome through cultural activity. Facilitators work with participants to discover, map, connect and celebrate their diverse range of community assets. These assets are then harnessed by the community to complete actions that strengthen the communities.

● COMMUNITY KITCHEN - APPRECIATION

The 'Community Kitchen' program, instigated by the proprietor of the Inveresk Tavern and supported by the Migrant Resource Centre, opened up the kitchen of what is otherwise 'a working-class pub with cold beer and hot chips and steaks' to volunteers from a range of cultural groups to prepare traditional foods for patrons and raise funds for their communities. It provided opportunities for people to meet and form connections with new Australians from Sudan, Bhutan and Afghanistan and experience their traditional foods. Across 2018 it averaged 42 patrons per week, delivered 1236 meals and returned \$8215 to participating groups. Generating even greater levels of appreciation for cultural diversity than the program itself was positive media coverage in local newspapers and the ABC as well as Australia Day awards for community events.

● THE FIRST TASMANIANS: OUR STORY EXHIBITION - BELONGING

The First Tasmanians: Our Story exhibition at QVMAG generates many of the cultural outcomes detailed in this strategy, but the most important for the Aboriginal community is that of 'Belonging'. Having the local Aboriginal story told, by Aboriginal people, in prime position in one of the region's most important cultural institutions, is the beginning of a process of listening and relationship building designed to address the absence of the Aboriginal story in Tasmania and across Australia. Developed under the guidance of the QVMAG Aboriginal Reference Group, it features rarely-seen original objects examines climate change, astronomy and stories of creation, craft, technology and architecture. As expressed in the description of the outcome, it is designed to 'offer illumination of the present by providing a sense of continuity with the past, and a pathway to the future'.





OUR FOCUS

Five strategic focus areas have been distilled from the research and consultation undertaken in the development of this plan. Focusing on these strategic areas, whilst pursuing the visions of the strategy through the delivery of cultural outcomes, will make a significant contribution to achieving the vision of the Greater Launceston Plan.



IMAGE Scott Gelston

VALUE AND RESPECT ABORIGINAL CULTURE

WHY IS THIS STRATEGIC ACTION AREA IMPORTANT?

The time is long overdue for Aboriginal Tasmanians to be truly acknowledged, and for their significance in our modern-day culture to be valued.

The objective of this Strategic Focus Area is to establish, commit to, and formalise a relationship with Aboriginal communities in Launceston.

It is important that this relationship respects, acknowledges, and builds upon, the following points:

- The notion of Culture for Tasmanian Aboriginal people is an embodied and all-encompassing way of living and being which is constantly evolving and adapting.
- The Aboriginal people are more than just stakeholders alongside other community groups / institutions / business entities – the naming of them as traditional owners of the land in the Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country has deep meaning and is more than just token words.
- Aboriginal stories need to be told by Aboriginal people.
- There must be recognition of the value of the cultural expertise of Aboriginal people as Knowledge Brokers – unpaid board and committee work undermines this. There needs to be a concerted and proactive effort to promote the inclusion of Aboriginal people in key strategic roles and their presence governance bodies.
- Sovereignty has never been ceded. Land ownership / stewardship is fundamental to the Aboriginal people's sense of belonging and their cultural practice.

- The Aboriginal story must be present in significant places. Providing up-to-date and historically accurate information in places of cultural significance is paramount.

WHAT STRATEGIES DOES THIS INCLUDE?

- 1.1. Undertake formal steps to integrate the culture of the Tasmanian Aboriginal People in a meaningful manner into Council's planning and decision-making processes.
- 1.2. Through a process of truth-telling with the whole community, build an honest understanding of the culture and stories of the Tasmanian Aboriginal People.
- 1.3. Provide historically accurate information in places of cultural significance.
- 1.4. Ensure Council and community members are equipped with the tools to confidently value and respect Aboriginal Culture.

WHAT MIGHT SOME OF THE ACTIONS LOOK LIKE?

- Develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Initiate the development of a Value and Respect Aboriginal Culture toolkit, including Knowledge Brokerage Guidelines, Cultural Safety protocols and approved Acknowledgment of Country.
- Support the implementation of a broad community education program that promotes acknowledgment of local Aboriginal history within our communities.
- Develop a schedule of reviewing and providing cultural context for existing statues and commemorations.

2.

REALISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR CULTURAL PLACES AND ASSETS

WHY IS THIS STRATEGIC ACTION AREA IMPORTANT?

Our cultural places provide the physical context for a vital and welcoming community. We need to ensure equitable access, provide appropriate resourcing and communicate their value and role. Our cultural places include the bushland and environment surrounding the City, our managed parklands and the built environment - especially QVMAG, the Princess Theatre, and Albert Hall. Making best use of these cultural places will build the cultural vitality of Launceston and also contribute to the economic sustainability of the City and well-being of the community.

The importance of this focus area is heightened by the significant changes in process in the City and slated to be rolled out over the next number of years. Placing a cultural lens over these developments and ensuring a focus on cultural outcomes in their planning and development will ensure we glean the greatest benefit from their implementation.

Our cultural assets - such as the QVMAG natural sciences, historical and visual arts collections - help us to understand our past and use this knowledge to build a better future. Appropriately housing and providing equitable access to these collections will make a significant contribution to the cultural vitality of the community.

WHAT STRATEGIES DOES THIS INCLUDE?

- 2.1. Contribute to UTAS Inveresk, Newnham and City centre developments.
- 2.2. Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery physical and conceptual redevelopment.
- 2.3. Continue to develop a more active connection to and understanding of the Gorge and kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary. Explore opportunities for physical infrastructure to better connect our City to our environmental treasures.

- 2.4. Integrated wayfinding and storytelling elements to more strongly connect the community and visitor experience to the stories of the City.
- 2.5. A tourism / visitor experience reaching beyond the walls and linking with cultural features of the region.
- 2.6. Prioritise accessibility and inclusivity in all cultural assets, projects and programs.

WHAT MIGHT SOME OF THE ACTIONS LOOK LIKE?

- The development of an interactive early childhood centre for STEAM-based learning partnership between QVMAG and UTAS.
- Greater utilisation of the opportunities presented by co-location with UTAS.
- Building fit-for-purpose facilities which encourage return visitation and a heightened sense of ownership by the Launceston community.
- QVMAG as a national and international centre for research and education making the most of its unique and extensive collection.
- Explore further income generation opportunities at QVMAG.
- Albert Hall Redevelopment.
- Undertake a needs assessment of Launceston's performance infrastructure, particularly in relation to music, dance and theatre.
- Develop a cultural map of Launceston highlighting its tangible and intangible cultural assets to support placemaking initiatives in the municipality.

FOSTER CREATIVE PRACTICE

WHY IS THIS STRATEGIC ACTION AREA IMPORTANT?

Launceston is home to many creative individuals and organisations. Visual artists, entrepreneurs, chefs, dancers, designers, musicians, actors, directors, sculptors, film makers – these and many other creative individuals call this place home. Often this is because it the place they were born and grew up in. Sometimes it is because they have been attracted to the cultural strengths and opportunities the region offers.

Creative practice is an essential element of a culturally vital society. Council is a multi-faceted organisation with influence in, and often responsibility for, many elements which can help to support an environment which fosters its development.

This multi-faceted nature can also provide obstacles to creative practice. From the outside it can be difficult to understand who to approach, what to consider, even how to begin a conversation about a creative project. From the inside of the organisation it can be challenging to determine who is responsible for facilitating this dialogue – particularly when creative projects often challenge existing structures and work across perceived boundaries. Sometimes this can lead to a reactive rather than a responsive culture.

WHAT STRATEGIES DOES THIS INCLUDE?

Using the language and planning framework provided by this strategy, the City will take a proactive approach to fostering creative practice:

- 3.1. Provide and promote clear pathways for dialogue with the creative community.
- 3.2. Build creative networks – use the multi-faceted nature of the organisation to make connections between organisations and individuals which might not otherwise be apparent.

- 3.3. Support new ideas and enterprises – as well as the continued invigoration of existing cultural entities.
- 3.4. Promote Council’s existing infrastructure and strategic framework which supports the ongoing development of creative practice.
- 3.5. Investigate opportunities to support skills development, training and employment opportunities for the cultural sector.

WHAT MIGHT SOME OF THE ACTIONS LOOK LIKE?

- Develop an Arts and Culture Grants policy and program using cultural outcomes as criteria for assessment.
- Develop a Creative Hub with local artists, cultural organisations and creative industries – integrate with the UTAS Inveresk Precinct development.
- Develop a central place for creative activity to be celebrated and enacted – bring together creative individuals from diverse creative sectors.
- The Inveresk development specifically provides opportunities for the enhancement of the partnership between the University of Tasmania and the City of Launceston.
- Consider opening up a new public space between QVMAG and the Academy Gallery to cross pollinate the work of the two institutions, to improve access and to enhance the visitor experience.
- Opportunity for exchange, dialogue and innovative curatorial practice.
- Creating meaningful encounters between artists, students, scholars, the public, and the QVMAG collections.
- Co-curricular programming to generate, develop and inspire new audiences.

4.

REVEAL OUR CULTURAL STORIES

WHY IS THIS STRATEGIC ACTION AREA IMPORTANT?

The City of Launceston is a City of stories. Understanding and providing opportunities for the telling of these stories will enrich the lives of people who live here and attract and retain visitors with a desire to know more about what makes this place special.

In a globalised world which homogenises ideas and breaks relationships down to transactions, knowing the particular stories of the places we live in and the people we live with heightens our sense of belonging and deepens our appreciation of and empathy for others.

The stories of a place are what makes it unique and special, even when these stories tell of a troubled past.

For a long time the history of this place was buried and forgotten. Children were taught that the Aboriginal story had ended. Having convict ancestry was a source of shame and wiped from memory. But unresolved truths have a way of surfacing.¹⁰

Speaking these 'unresolved truths' and providing context for the stories to be told and acknowledged will enable our focus to shift towards building a better future without being weighed down by the baggage of the past.

A deeper appreciation of stories of people and place can also serve to build community. For instance, the stories often told of our Northern Suburbs can create an image of a place in great deficit. When the opportunity is provided for people who live north of the river to tell their own

stories, cultural riches are revealed and become the foundation for better stories to be told.

Learning and appreciating the stories of our recently arrived cultural communities will assist in their integration into our communities, contribute to our cultural enrichment and build their feelings of belonging.

WHAT STRATEGIES DOES THIS INCLUDE?

- 4.1. Seek opportunities to communicate the richness of our history (Aboriginal, architectural, entrepreneurial, etc.) to residents and visitors.
- 4.2. Bring our history to the streets of the City.
- 4.3. Provide opportunities for recently arrived cultural communities to tell their stories and share their culture.

WHAT MIGHT SOME OF THE ACTIONS LOOK LIKE?

- Develop a Public Art policy and program.
- Use cultural outcomes as drivers for existing initiatives – City Heart, My Place My Future et al.
- Investigate opportunities for the development of a multicultural community centre in the City centre.

BUILD AND EXTEND PARTNERSHIPS

WHY IS THIS STRATEGIC ACTION AREA IMPORTANT?

Tasmania is an island. This brings with it both cultural opportunities and challenges. It produces a capacity for self-reliance and independence which has likely contributed to the disproportionate number of firsts that the City of Launceston is responsible for. Alternatively, it can engender an inward-looking and exclusionary culture which has traditionally been wary of external influence.

We live in a society that has many demands on resources. Gaining the greatest benefit from available resources is a primary imperative of all levels of government and the communities they serve. In order to deliver the greatest benefit from the cultural strengths of the Launceston community, strong links need to be forged between our cultural institutions. We need to understand where our individual strengths lie and where we can use these strengths to support others in the delivery of their cultural imperatives. Likewise, we should not be afraid to acknowledge where the strengths of others can be relied upon to assist in the delivery of our objectives and missions.

The clear visions and outcomes articulated in this cultural strategy will assist in understanding this from the City of Launceston point of view. Using these as a framework we can better understand where our alignments are with other cultural and governance institutions. This can be the basis of an ongoing relationship where all parties rely on each other for the delivery of their objectives rather than competing for resources – supporting each other to achieve the best possible outcomes for the communities they serve and operate in.

One of the elements of a sustainable future for Launceston is particularly reliant on the development of partnerships – the skills development and employability of our community. Our cultural institutions, particularly those with an education focus, have an opportunity to make a significant contribution to this challenge if the right partnerships are developed which adopt the framework of this strategy.

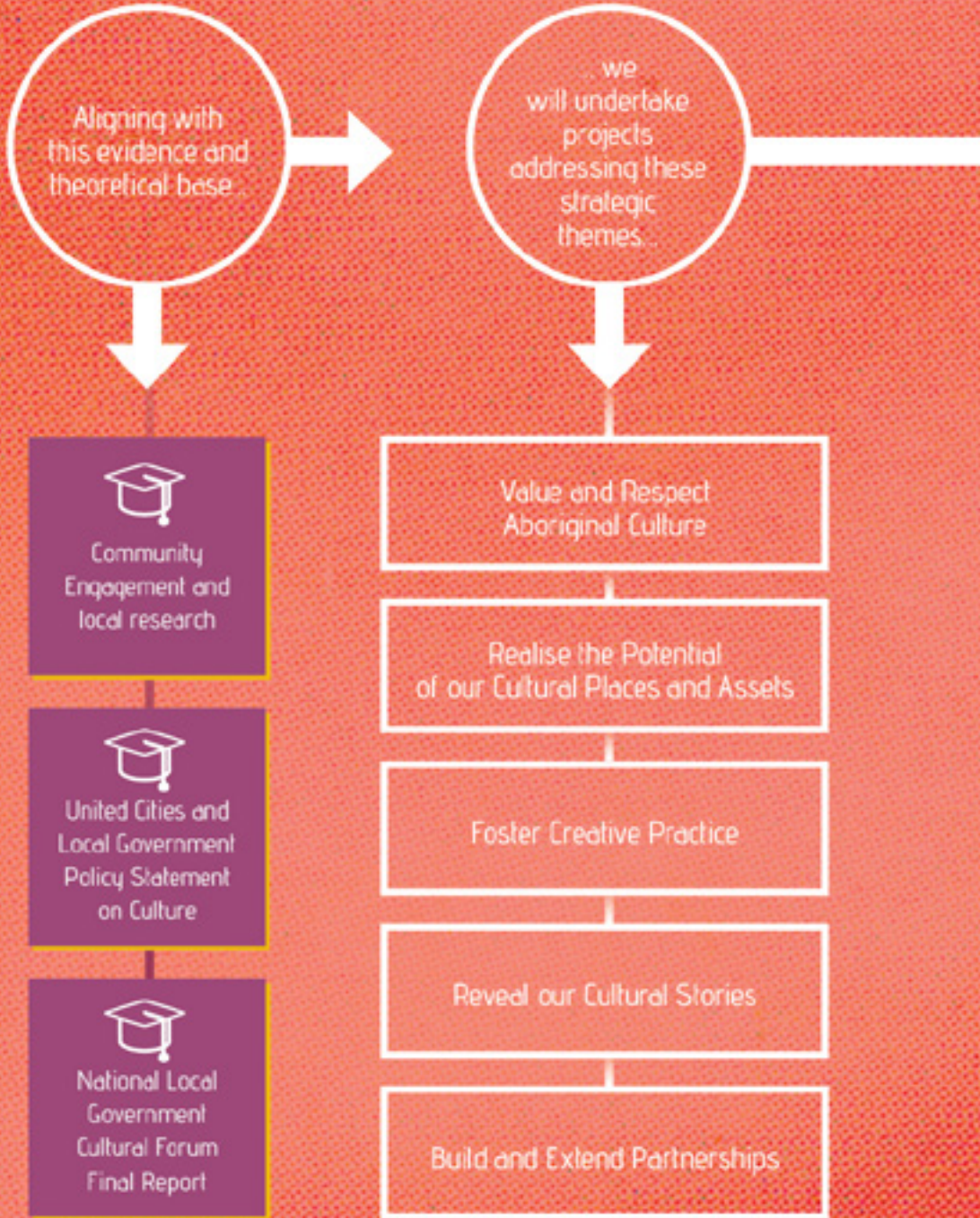
WHAT STRATEGIES DOES THIS INCLUDE?

- 5.1. Audit and needs assessment of Council-owned facilities including opportunities for resource sharing and cross promotion.
- 5.2. Seek opportunities for ongoing collaboration and communication between state-level cultural organisations.
- 5.3. Promote and support life-long learning in the Launceston community.
- 5.4. Initiate and facilitate partnerships between Council and community organisations and between community organisations to better utilise shared resources.

WHAT MIGHT SOME OF THE ACTIONS LOOK LIKE?

- Support the Cultural Working Group between City of Launceston, University of Tasmania and State Government with a focus on the cultural outcomes of the Inveresk development.
- Contribute to Northern Suburbs revitalisation - My Place My Future / ABCDE Learning Sites.
- Consider the proposed Launceston bid for UN Creative Cities - Creative field of Gastronomy.

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK





STIMULATION

ENRICHMENT

INSIGHT

APPRECIATION

BELONGING

Launceston is a dynamic place where people live meaningful and culturally vital lives; **filled with stimulating activities**, highlighted by aesthetically rich experiences and **fueled by curiosity**.

Launceston is a welcoming place which builds a better future by **celebrating the rich cultural diversity** of its people and **recognising the stories of its past**.

Sustainable prosperity for Greater Launceston will be achieved by consolidating and building **nationally and internationally recognised strategic advantages** for the region through a focus on **creativity and innovation**, maintaining exceptional environmental and liveability qualities and ensuring a **diverse, connected and inclusive** region.

FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION

STEP ONE: DEVELOP CULTURAL STRATEGY

- Research and review global best practice
- Develop foundations of cultural strategy
- Undertake extensive consultation with local stakeholders
- Council endorsement of Cultural Strategy

YEAR ONE

STEP TWO: DEFINE ACTIONS AND PROCESSES

- Establish Implementation Framework
- Establish Cultural Advisory Committee
- Develop and prioritise actions for each Theme
- Allocate existing resources to prioritised actions

ONGOING

STEP THREE: IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR

- Implement agreed and resourced actions
- Advocate for new resources as required
- Undertake annual planning and reporting activities with Cultural Advisory Committee
- Integrate ongoing evaluation into planning processes



IMAGE Chris Crerar



APPENDICES

1. Map of Greater Launceston Area
2. 2016 Cultural Audit
3. 2018 Culture in Launceston Survey summary
4. Related City of Launceston Policies and Strategies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Launceston would like to express our thanks to all members of the community who have generously participated in community consultation sessions and/or responded to the Draft Cultural Strategy survey – your input is highly valuable, and we look forward to working in collaboration with the community to advance cultural vitality over the next 10 years.

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GRAPHIC DESIGN BY Louise Thrush

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IMAGE Rob Burnett





Published November 2020
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