Wollongong City Council
CULTURAL PLAN
2014 - 2018

SNAPSHOT
Through culture and the creative arts, we celebrate and share our city’s history and identity. The Wollongong City Council Cultural Plan 2014 - 2018 has guided Council in supporting arts and culture in Wollongong over the last four years. Included in this snapshot are some of the achievements of the Plan.
AN INCLUSIVE AND CONNECTED CITY

The Wollongong Heritage & Stories Website
Local museums are significant contributors to the Wollongong community as they are custodians and repositories of heritage, stories and objects. Council has worked with local museums providing their volunteers with training to assess, manage and digitise their collections. These collections are now available to be viewed through a ‘virtual museum’, found on the Wollongong Heritage & Stories website.

Community Cultural Development Projects
Wollongong City Council provides opportunities for the community to engage in the arts and art making.

Mountains, Sea and Me
This partnership project between Council and Vision Australia supported people who are blind or have low vision to develop new skills and build relationships with creative community groups in Wollongong. Vision Australia clients worked closely with Coniston Men’s Shed and local artists to create tactile artworks. These artworks were exhibited at Project Contemporary Artspace during Viva la Gong and are now on permanent display in the Vision Australia’s Wollongong office.
Women Out Loud
Council developed this program with local comedic teaching artists to help women find their voices through comedy. Women Out Loud was a 10 week workshop series that provided mentoring in performance and storytelling skills. This program incorporated 3 performance opportunities at open mic events and at Viva la Gong.

Place Making
During the last four years Council has worked with local communities to deliver place making projects in many suburbs across the city, such as Bellambi, Berkeley, Corrimal, Dapto and Unanderra.
Creative Spaces Tool Kit
This Tool Kit has been developed to support and increase local creative and commercial economies and add life to the city centre through innovation and creativity. The Creative Spaces Strategy aims to encourage and support partnerships between local businesses and local artists in a bid to activate empty buildings and shopfronts.

Place Making
Council is committed to fostering strong local community identity through place making projects that reflect the cultural diversity and uniqueness of the community.

Public Art Program and Strategy
Public art has the ability to create a unique sense of culture, place and identity; it is an integral part of a creative and liveable city. Currently, there are more than 120 public artworks across the Wollongong local government area. Council has developed the Public Art Strategy 2016-2021 to ensure that into the future, our public art projects are planned, delivered and maintained in a strategic manner.

Wollongong Acquisitive Sculpture Award (Sculpture in the Garden)
Sculpture in the Garden is now a biennial outdoor exhibition that provides an opportunity for artists to showcase their works in the beautiful and unique setting of the Wollongong Botanic Garden. The Wollongong Acquisitive Sculpture Award sees the winning artwork becoming a permanent addition to the Garden. In 2016, the inaugural acquisitive award winner was Louis Pratt, with his sculpture titled King Coal. In 2018, the winning artist was Michael Purdy with his work Steel City.

Secret Suburbs
This program provided community members and groups with the opportunity to talk about the places, hidden treasures and creative projects that make their suburbs special. Secret Suburbs was presented in Thirroul, Corrimal, Port Kembla and Dapto with more than 200 people participating.

Creative Spaces
Council manages six short tenure artist studios in the Lower Wollongong Town Hall; a Creative Container; and the Curio Gallery.

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Developing Wollongong’s Evening Economy

Having a strong evening economy provides social and cultural benefits the community. During the last four years we’ve created initiatives such as:

- A small business assessment team to support local businesses
- Streamlined process for event applications for the city centre
- Introduced midnight trade for outdoor dining in the city centre

Over the last three years, 80 new small bars and cafes have opened making the city an enjoyable place to visit. This transformation has also seen a significant change in the perception of and actual safety of the city centre.

Live Music

NSW Live Music Office recognises Wollongong’s approach to transforming nightlife as best practice statewide. In April 2014 The Wollongong Live Music Action Plan was endorsed as a component of the Cultural Plan by Wollongong City Council. Council has introduced the issuing of section 149 certificates. They acknowledge that people living in the CBD can expect activities associated with the evening economy. As part of the DA approvals for residential developments, Council has introduced acoustic privacy conditions.

Advantage Wollongong

A partnership between Council, NSW Department of Industry and the University of Wollongong promotes Wollongong and attracts business relocation and investment. Services include assistance with key local introductions, site selection, decision support material, advice on government regulations, policies and incentives.

iAccelerate

iAccelerate is a University of Wollongong business incubator and accelerator to build and grow businesses. iAccelerate is built around a strong educational program, formalised business acceleration monitoring and one-to-one mentoring. The iAccelerate centre is the region’s first purpose-built business incubator, and can house up to 280 start-up companies.

Made in Wollongong

Made in Wollongong is a branding platform for local makers to showcase their creativity, sell and promote their original work through selected stockists and to join a growing community of makers living and working in Wollongong. Branding has been developed, with an Expression of Interest on Council website.
Nights on Crown
Lower Crown Street Mall was transformed into a free winter evening festival over three nights in June 2018. The creative centrepiece was “Intrude” by Amanda Parer. This free, family-friendly event also offered live music, food, drink, dancers, live performances, plus interactive activities to discover and explore.

Nocturnal Arts
This pilot project fostered lively cultural activities in the Mall, Arts Precinct and Globe Lane after dusk. The program included live art, visual displays and projections, live and interactive performances by more than 10 creative artists and companies. Nocturnal Arts ran over three weeks with over 3000 people engaging with the pop-up performances and installations.

Creative Dialogues
An annual program of workshops, forums and events aims to enable, educate and foster a local creative community. During 2017 more than 550 people attended across 21 events.

Why Music Matters forum as part of Creative Dialogues
**Events**

Council organises many major community events and festivals, including Wollongong’s Australia Day celebration, New Year’s Eve event and our annual arts and cultural festival, Viva la Gong.

**Playing in the Precinct**

This program has partnered with musicians from the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, Illawarra Folk Club and Honk!Oz to create a vibrant community space for lunch goers to enjoy live music. It also provides employment and skill development opportunities to emerging singer/songwriters. Playing in the Precinct runs over both autumn and spring, with each two hour performance entertaining approximately 60 people.

**Sharing Stories**

Wollongong City Council, in partnership with Merrigong Theatre Company, worked with local Aboriginal Elders and knowledge holders to gather traditional stories of the local landscape and its creation. These stories were shared with young Indigenous people from the Illawarra area and interpreted and performed through song, puppetry, dance and theatre. Sharing Stories culminated in three performances during Reconciliation Week 2017.

**Viva la Gong**

The Viva la Gong festival provides access for the community to a range of cultural experiences across visual and performance art and from popular culture through to classical cultural forms. It is a multi-faceted festival offering performance, exhibitions, physical theatre, workshops, art markets and international food. Last year’s festival was held on 11 November with approximately 20,000 people attending.
Grants and Sponsorship
Council has a number of programs for providing financial assistance to groups and individuals in the Wollongong community, including:

Large Cultural Grants
Ward-Based Arts Grants that support the delivery of community cultural development projects that have been developed in collaboration between local artists and communities. These projects result in a wide range of artistic and developmental outcomes that add to the artistic and creative amenity in each ward.

Small Cultural Grants Program
Enable a diverse range of activities that enrich the cultural life of our area, and promote community participation in cultural activities. This program is open to individual and not-for-profit community groups in the local cultural industry, including music, performing arts, visual arts, crafts and other cultural initiatives.

Small Grants NAIDOC Week Event
These grants support not-for-profit community organisations to run events and activities as part of Wollongong’s NAIDOC week celebrations. They aim to involve as many people as possible in celebrations of the history, culture and achievements of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Sponsorship of Community Events
Event sponsorship funds support not for profit organisations or individuals seeking to organise events within the Wollongong Local Government Area that has demonstrated benefit to the community.

Contributions to Public Bands and Choirs - Support for public bands and choirs that contribute to the community’s sense of belonging and cultural life.

Support and Partnership
Council supports and partners with a number of cultural organisations. These relationships enable us to work together to deliver the strategies and actions in the Community Strategic Plan and the Cultural Plan.