

Minutes

**Arts Advisory Committee Meeting**



<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 4 March, 2026
<b>Time</b>	6pm -7.30pm
<b>Location</b>	Collingwood Town Hall, Abbotsford
<b>Chair</b>	Ariel Blum and Penny Kyprianou (co-Chair)
<b>Minute taker</b>	Celina Lei (Arts Officer)
<b>Content Manager Reference</b>	<b>D26/132124</b>

**Statement of Recognition of Wurundjeri Land**

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

**Attendees**

<b>Councillor/s</b>	
<b>Committee members</b>	Alan Hill, Annette Shiell, Michael Fikaris, Miranda Hill, Nabila Malik, Nikki Ralston, Wai Zhen Chok, Zoe Rinkel
<b>Council Officers</b>	Vicky Guglielmo (Manager Libraries, Arts & Events), Penny Kyprianou (Coordinator Festivals and Events), Ariel Blum (Acting Coordinator Arts and Culture), Celina Lei (Arts Officer)
<b>Guests</b>	
<b>Apologies</b>	Cr Sarah McKenzie, Cr Andrew Davies, Brigid Moriarty, Gabriela Bazan

Item number	Item title or subject	Minute notes
1.	Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country  Penny Kyprianou	Introduction of committee members yet to be introduced to entire group.
2.	Chair nomination  Penny Kyprianou	In the absence of the Chair (Cr McKenzie), the decision to volunteer or appoint a Chair was deferred to the Committee.  The Committee appointed Yarra staff, Penny Kyprianou and Ariel Blum to co-Chair.  No objections.
3.	Adoption of minutes from previous meeting  Ariel Blum	Minutes adopted by the Committee.
4.	<b>City of Yarra strategic priorities for the arts</b>  <b>Ariel Blum</b> Acting Coordinator Arts and Culture	<b>The following questions were posed to the Committee:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What immediate measures can the City of Yarra implement to sustain the local arts ecosystem?</li> <li>• What are some low hanging fruit ideas/measures?</li> <li>• What is the city losing when funding to arts organisations is cut?</li> </ul>

- How do we get grants and opportunities out into the community?

**Key discussion points**

- Revisit of topics discussed in last Arts Advisory Committee meeting (3 December 2025).
- Understanding the impact Creative Victoria funding cuts for arts organisations based in Yarra.
- Losing arts organisations in Yarra amounts to losing precinct activation, jobs and reputation.
- The deficit created by state funding cuts will put the pressure on Yarra City Council as organisations look to access Council grants and support.
- The flow on impact to local artists and arts experiences when arts organisations are not successful with their applications in major 4-year funding rounds raises concerns around artists leaving Yarra.
- Some insights around Creative Victoria’s priorities were shared, including supporting artists and organisations to tap into alternative sources of funding in the private and philanthropic sector.
- Discussion around how to work with developers, incentivise funding for the arts and their responsibility in supporting artists.
- Hodyl + Co was brought up as a consultancy with expertise in writing cultural infrastructure into development plans.
- There is currently no policy or framework requiring developers to fund public art.
- Suggestions of creating cross-disciplinary creative residencies or creative ‘matchmaking’ events for networking.
- Officers pointed to the Resilience Roundtable (2025), with further details to come around projects responding to those outcomes.
- An audit of Yarra’s empty spaces was proposed, specifically around potential for creative use.
- Officers confirmed that the Community Infrastructure Plan endorsed by Council last year identified current assets, current utilisation of property, and where new builds needed to happen.
- A scoping study of Richmond Library is currently underway, with the potential for cultural infrastructure.
- Panel suggested that creative thinking be applied around where underutilised spaces can be offered to creative practitioners. Some examples discussed included universities that have excess capacity during term break, gyms that are closed during the day, libraries that can be accessible at night for rehearsals or cafés offering their space to artists during non-business hours.
- Acknowledgement of logistical and cultural barriers to accessing underutilised private spaces, as well as duty of care, and defining Council responsibilities.
- Resource and case studies shared on cities like Berlin and New York that have ‘frozen rent’ for artists, including the Woodman Family Foundation Housing Stability Grant for

		<p>Artists (WFF HSG) and the Berlin Studio Program.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers to engage the Planning Team in conversations around private development contributions to cultural infrastructure.</li> <li>• Officers to look at models of creative space activations internationally and share information in pre-read for next meeting.</li> <li>• Engage with other Councils to learn more about successful local and existing models that provide dedicated artist space.</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>Public Art Policy renewal</b></p> <p><b>Ariel Blum</b> Acting Coordinator Arts and Culture</p> <p><b>Celina Lei</b> Arts Officer</p>	<p><b>The following questions were posed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should the City of Yarra’s role be in public art?</li> <li>• Do we drive the “making” of public art, help others make Public Art or co-design public art outputs with the community?</li> <li>• Should Yarra be limiting commission opportunities to Yarra-based artists?</li> <li>• Should public programming for public art be considered?</li> </ul> <p><b>Key discussion points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers provided an update on public art outcomes from the Public Art Policy 2015-2020 and timeline for policy renewal.</li> <li>• Council’s role in all the different approaches of supporting public art in the city was recognised and seen as important.</li> <li>• Consideration was given to how partnering with small to medium arts organisations to manage public art projects, as opposed to Council managing those projects, may have a positive effect on employment opportunities for the sector. Discussion also covered the potential risk of relocating the administrative burden for small to medium arts organisations around insurance and compliance.</li> <li>• The lack of clarity around how to initiate public art in Yarra was discussed, with the need to explore this in the policy renewal.</li> <li>• Different perspectives were shared amongst the panel on whether Yarra’s commission opportunities should be exclusively for Yarra artists or open to artists from other LGA’s. Panel suggested things to consider include whether there is a sufficient number of artists living and or working in Yarra with the ability to fulfil all of our Public Art projects and if there is a risk by limiting opportunities to only invite Yarra based artists. EG limited and non-competitive submissions from Yarra residents for the LGBTQIA+ memorial.</li> <li>• Consider short-term vs long-term, temporary vs</li> </ul>

permanent commissions and how these can incorporate both Yarra artists and those beyond.

- A festival model around temporary public artworks can be considered, such as [Frankston Street Art Festival](#) and [Wall to Wall Festival](#).
- The need for more mentorship and skills development for early to mid-career artists to build their capacity in large scale Public Art projects. EG a lead artist on a major commission might have an obligation to ensure they engage a local mentee as part of their project team.
- Interactive art, things that community can play with and the benefit of improving mental health and social cohesion through art e.g. the Keith Haring mural activations.
- If policy is too prescriptive, it will not produce good outcomes because the opportunity for big picture thinking is lost.
- Setting up an expectation around the number of Public artworks Council expects to be delivered within a period of time is setting up an expectation that might not be an accurate success measure.
- Consider public art for future generations.
- Private developments may face challenges in achieving diverse public art outcomes that engage community and reflect site context without support from experienced arts practitioners. To that end, further discussion took around the centrality and value of the artist with Public Art projects, as opposed to strictly looking at outputs and outcomes
- Significant concern around AI and design treatments rather than engaging artists to work with designers or architects.
- Strong opposition to prescribe /define public art's role and how people might respond.
- UK-based organisation Situations was mentioned as a source of inspiration on the possibilities of public art and artists as agents of change.
- Art is one thing that teaches people empathy.
- Public art and connection to Country, citing [RMIT's Future Memorials program](#).

#### **Actions**

- Officers to conduct qualitative scoping of Public Art Policy 2015-2020 outcomes, including analysis on number of public artworks delivered by Yarra artists.
- Address the question as to 'how does Council want to initiate community-led public art' and provide clarity

		around the process.
6.	<b>Festivals and Events update for summer 2025/26</b>  <b>Penny Kyprianou</b> Festival and Events Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer provided a recap on the summer festival and events season.</li> </ul>
7.	<b>Other business</b>  <b>Ariel</b> Acting Coordinator Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee encouraged to read the pre-read material that included Council's submission to the inquiry in to the creative industries.</li> <li>• Advocacy roadmap not shared in last Committee meeting, Officers awaiting updates.</li> <li>• Committee shared Creative Australia's free coaching service as a resource supporting artists to access funding.</li> <li>• Brunswick Street Festival remount 2027 report going to Council meeting and will be shared.</li> </ul>
Meeting closed		7.30pm
Next scheduled meeting		Wednesday 6 May, 2026