

Minutes

Arts Advisory Committee Meeting



Date	Wednesday 6 May 2026
Time	6pm -7.30pm
Location	Collingwood Town Hall, Wurundjeri Room
Chair	Cr Andrew Davies
Minute taker	Penny Kyprianou
Content Manager Reference	D2026/0237892

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

Councillor/s	Cr Andrew Davies
Committee members	Annette Shiell, Michael Fikaris, Miranda Hill, Nabila Malik, Nikki Ralston, Wei Zhen Chok
Council Officers	Vicky Guglielmo (Manager Libraries, Arts & Events) , Penny Kyprianou (Coordinator Festivals and Events), Ariel Blum (Acting Coordinator Arts Development), Rafaela McDonald (Arts Development Officer)
Guests	John Brockway, CFO
Apologies	Cr Sarah McKenzie, Alan Hill, Bridget Moriarty, Zoe Rinkel No response – Gabriela Bazan

Item number	Item title or subject	Minute notes
1.	Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country Cr. Andrew Davies	
2.	Adoption of minutes from previous meeting	The minutes from the previous meeting were circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee agreed the minutes were an accurate record of discussion. The minutes were formally adopted without amendment.
3.	2026/2027 Council Budget. To provide high level context on the draft 26/27 draft Council budget and seek committee advice on priorities and risks for arts and creative communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual budget context: constrained funding environment, high inflation and cost pressures; Council aiming to buffer impacts on ratepayers within the rate cap.• No service cuts proposed; focus on core services (“roads, rates, rubbish”) while maintaining amenity (e.g. graffiti cleanup, garden maintenance) and community programs.• Capital works: \$40m program (record), addressing community assets and growth needs; no major new Arts capital facility project included in the draft 2026/27 budget.

	<p>John Brockway, Chief Financial Officer, City of Yarra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and culture program highlights referenced: Leaps and Bounds Festival, Festive Yarra (including New Year’s Eve and carols), major festivals program, LGBTQIA+ permanent memorial, public space activation, Richmond Library redevelopment planning, town hall/community building upgrades, Victoria Street and Bridge Road activation, subsidised venue hire, and support to Aboriginal partnerships, multicultural engagement and queer community initiatives. Officers provided a high-level overview of the current grants allocation (approx. \$1.5M total), including the Creative City stream (~\$309k). It was confirmed that funding for the Creative City stream is expected to remain consistent in 2026/27. Draft budget noted as on public exhibition via “Your Say Yarra”, with submissions to be reviewed by Councillors. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers to provide detailed data on grant allocation, including: new vs returning applicants, participation of artists across all grant categories, comparative data across previous years. Seek information on how grants are currently evaluated and report back to the committee (evaluation approach/metrics).
<p>4.</p>	<p>Public art policy (update).</p> <p>To reflect on the performance of the current Public Art Policy and seek Committee advice on the principles and directions that should underpin the new Public Art Policy/framework.</p> <p>Ariel Blum Acting Coordinator Arts Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee discussed how success should be defined in Council’s investment in the Arts, noting the absence of a clear evaluation framework. Members highlighted the need for both quantitative and qualitative measures, including participation, community impact, artist outcomes, economic contribution, and broader social and cultural value. The Committee also discussed the importance of measuring both outputs and outcomes, noting that evaluation should capture not only activity levels but also longer-term impact. Officers identified the upcoming Arts Strategy renewal as an opportunity to establish a small set of core success indicators. The Committee also supported exploring an economic and social impact study of the Arts in Yarra to inform future planning. The Committee strongly supported investigating the commissioning of an economic and social impact study of the Arts in Yarra to inform future strategy, advocacy and investment decisions. Officers also presented a review of the current Public Art Policy, noting strong investment outcomes alongside gaps in evaluation and long-term maintenance planning. Draft principles for a new policy were introduced, including First Peoples First, activation and revitalisation, and enriching public space. It was also noted that the current 1% capital allocation approach can present challenges for smaller projects. The Committee emphasised the importance of storytelling, truth-telling, and diverse community representation, and supported the inclusion of temporary and ephemeral public art. The role of public art in community connection, wellbeing, and supporting emerging artists was also highlighted.

		<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to explore options for an economic and social impact study for the Arts in Yarra. • Officers to develop draft evaluation metrics in consultation with the Committee. • Officers to incorporate Committee feedback into the draft Public Art Policy principles. • Officers to explore approaches to evaluation and maintenance planning within the policy.
5.	<p>Play in Residence and Room to Create EOIs</p> <p>To outline currently open EOIs and seek committee advice on how these interventions respond to sector wide challenges.</p> <p>Rafaella McDonald, Arts Development Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers presented the <i>Play in Residence</i> pilot program, a professional development initiative developed in response to sector wellbeing concerns identified through the Resilience Roundtable. The program focuses on creative practice, rest and peer connection, and has generated strong demand and high levels of interest. The program responds to sector-wide challenges including burnout, reduced capacity and artist sustainability, with an emphasis on rest, connection and non-productivity-based practice. • The Committee expressed strong support for the initiative and acknowledged its value in addressing artist wellbeing and sustaining creative practice. Discussion highlighted opportunities to embed evaluation measures, explore potential partnerships, and consider the broader sector context, including ongoing artist displacement from Yarra due to rising living costs and affordability pressures. • Officers also advised that two Expressions of Interest are currently open: <i>Play in Residence</i> and the <i>Room to Create Fund</i>. Committee members were encouraged to promote these opportunities through their networks to support broad sector participation. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to distribute EOI details to Committee members for promotion. • Officers to incorporate evaluation measures into the program to assess participant outcomes.
6.	<p>Festivals and Events. To provide context on upcoming Council-produced festivals</p> <p>Penny Kyprianou Coordinator, Festivals and Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers provided an update on the proposed Brunswick Street Festival, currently under consideration by Council and subject to Council budget endorsement, following a feasibility study indicating strong trader and community interest. • The proposed one-day festival would focus on live music, local business activation and daytime engagement. • The Committee discussed programming priorities, including the importance of supporting local artists and providing inclusive opportunities for young people, including non-alcohol focused programming. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to continue development of programming framework and provide further updates to the Committee.
Other Business		
Meeting		Cr Andrew Davies closed the meeting at 7.46pm

closed		
Next scheduled meeting		Wednesday 5 August, 2026