

Minutes

Arts Advisory Committee Meeting



Date	Wednesday 5 August 2026
Time	6pm - 7.30pm
Location	Collingwood Town Hall, Wurundjeri Room + online
Chair	Cr Andrew Davies
Minute taker	Brona Keenan (Coordinator Arts and Culture)
Content Manager Reference	D2026/319665

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	Michael Fikaris, Nabila Malik, Nikki Ralston, Allan Hill, Zoe Rinkel, Jade Bitar
Council Officers	Vicky Guglielmo (Manager Libraries, Arts & Events), Penny Kyprianou (Coordinator Festivals and Events), Brona Keenan (Coordinator Arts and Culture), Celina Lei (Arts Officer)
Guests	Elly Murrell, Community Development Officer
Apologies	Cr Sarah McKenzie, Annette Shiell, Miranda Hill, Ariel Blum (Arts Engagement Lead). No reply: Wei Zhen Chok

Item number	Item title or subject	Minute notes
1.	Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country Cr. Andrew Davies	Meeting started 7:10pm
2.	Adoption of minutes from previous meeting Conflict of interest	Minutes adopted
3.	2026 Yarra Community Awards	- Information provided to committee on the City of Yarra Community Awards 2026. - Nominations close 23 August. Action: Distribute nomination information by email to committee members.
4.	Arts Strategy	The new Arts Strategy is being developed. Context provided in pre-reading information to committee regarding arts alignment with the 2025-2029 Council Plan. Discussion: how can Council support a

		creative Yarra? Q. How can Council ensure our activity centres more vibrant and how can the Arts become more accessible and enrich daily life? Q. Is our aim to maintain our core priorities or have priorities shifted in the City? Q. Who are we serving, who is missing out, what are the challenges or systemic barriers we need to focus on? Discussion: • The Committee identified a focus on enhancing and boosting existing initiatives rather than creating entirely new programs. • In relation to live music, officers noted Council working in this space with live music planning work underway through live music precincts. • It could be interesting to look at grants system and how these may be used to serve the beautification of the streets and how they work in parallel with a precinct like Cremorne. • What are the opportunities for philanthropic contributions/partnerships with others and how Council can diversify the ways it thinks about partnerships. • In the consultation process it was raised that council needs to engage with artist run spaces, Wurundjeri, youth and children. In terms of practices, it was felt that live music venues are already covered through current work. Street art scene was identified by Committee as an area for consultation and officers noted that an internal anchor for this will be through Youth Services. • The Committee supported the notion of the arts being for everyone but also prompted the idea of the creative is necessary and how can the creative be platformed as essential. • It is important that Yarra doesn't lose activity in key centres such as Collingwood Yards and Abbotsford Convent. • Cross cultural exchange opportunities are important to foster a great arts community so it is not so touched by current politics – arts can combat this. Diversity and people of colour need to be fostered in the arts strategy. When diverse creatives are supported, this leads to more diverse audiences. This is impactful. • Information from grant recipients from the last 3-5 years could provide a source of information and capture what the experience was like for their project. • Cost of tickets and cost of living crisis are creating barriers to participation. • Discussion on how return on social investment is measured and valued. It is recognised that this can be difficult to put a dollar value to, and to measure how something improves quality of life, but it is important. • Yarra as a destination was discussed and the Committee felt there was something important in this. Victoria is a cultural state, and tourists do come to Yarra because of creative output. People want access to makers, and this is something Yarra has. Yarra as a destination for tourism has high value. Officers noted the new Brunswick Street Festival in October 2027 would provide a further opportunity for Yarra to promote itself as a destination. • Yarra is a connected city by nature and easy to move around. This could be further amplified. • Council should be planning and thinking culturally. When there is a new precinct, we ask where is the arts.
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		• A possible space to explore could be style guides with visual settings for different villages/precincts which tie art and other design elements in a precinct. • Community safety was a factor raised which could influence who attends events (and number of people) and how changes in response to this could make a difference. Art itself can play a role in providing a safer environment through activating spaces.
5.	Evaluation metrics for Public Art	Pre-reading identified a range of metrics that could be considered as Council plans for the development of the Public Art Framework as part of the Arts Strategy development. The Committee discussed metrics for evaluation. Discussion: • Online/web presence of the collection could be a good way to collect metrics. Collections online will drive people to see works in person. • Discussion on the increase in stolen and vandalised works, most likely for materials to be sold illegally. There is an inter Council response being planned around this. • Committee supported working backwards from the desired outcomes, determining what Council most wants to know and measure before deciding what data should be collected. Indicators should be impactful and help tell meaningful stories. It could be helpful to review and consolidate overlapping indicators, reducing them to a smaller number of key measures aligned with desired outcomes. • Committee discussed negative feedback as a relevant indicator of community engagement but also felt this could be difficult metric as sustained public negative feedback could mean a disconnect between the work and the space. • Public art needs to be centred in early planning. What makes good public art is to take people on the journey. • The committee held a constructive discussion about the appropriateness of "creative excellence" as an evaluation measure. Members raised concerns about the term's exclusivity, elitism, subjectivity, and colonial associations, advocating for more inclusive and culturally responsive approaches. There was strong support for evaluation metrics that prioritise community participation, cultural development, resident pride, and Yarra's creative identity over traditional notions of artistic excellence. Action: Review and consolidate the current list of indicators into a smaller, more meaningful set linked to desired outcomes. Circulate back to the advisory group.
	Festivals and Events Framework	An introduction was provided to the Committee to set the context for a Festivals and Events Framework, including its purpose, strategic alignment and role in guiding Council's approach to festivals and events in Yarra. Q. How does council assess whether festivals are the right fit for Yarra? How do we ensure they are strategically aligned, locally relevant, diverse, and deliver a meaningful community benefit. Discussion: • Committee discussed whether Council-produced events could be changed or discontinued. It was noted Council has the ability to

		review, change, or cease events where there is a clear rationale, such as changing community demand, shifting priorities, or an event no longer meeting its objectives. • The Committee identified a gap in Council-produced First Nations festivals, and Council officers noted that work is underway to help address this. • Does the list current list reflect the community? Carols, Remembrance day. Does it fit Council's priorities? • A push from community for Christmas decorations at Richmond Town Hall and a feeling that central Richmond/Burnley, below Victoria Street, is left out of the Yarra festival circuit. Big push for 'traditional' events and activities such as Anzac Day – noting more traditional outcomes are what people are yearning for as a balance to more progressive options. • Officers noted that council-produced events Carols in the Park changes locations each year and the Bridge Road traders Association traders activated Richmond Christmas markets. • Chair noted family focus is a big part of southern Richmond and that some events outside of Yarra were drawing families out of Yarra to access.
	New Acquisitions to the Collection	Two new public artworks were recently commissioned and acquired into the Collection: 1. <i>View Point</i> is by Angharad Neal-Williams, commissioned for Yambla Sports Pavillion in Clifton Hill. 2. Mythical Crane Boat by Van Phu Le, the Vietnamese Commemorative Marker commission, located in Lennox and Butler Street Park, Richmond. Discussion • What opportunities are there for public art in external developments, noting there are no specific triggers for public art but developers can be encouraged. • Public art commissions shouldn't be an afterthought and should be considered as part of the package for a project.
	Open Discussion	
Meeting closed		Close – 7:54pm
Next scheduled meeting		Wednesday 11 November 2026