

The background image is a photograph of a modern library interior. It features tall, dark-colored bookshelves filled with books. The walls are covered in a large, vibrant, and abstract mural with swirling patterns in shades of red, orange, yellow, and blue. The floor is made of large, square tiles in various colors, including red, orange, and grey. The ceiling has several circular recessed lights and a square ventilation grille. The overall atmosphere is bright and colorful.

**CITY
OF
MELVILLE**

**CULTURAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
STRATEGY**

DRAFT 5 - June 2022
Executive Summary

Introduction

The City of Melville (the 'City') commissioned the Melville Cultural Infrastructure Strategy ('MCIS') to guide the capital works development of the City's cultural facilities and assets over the course of the next 20 years (2021 – 2041).

Cultural facilities, assets and spaces are defined as places that support the vibrancy and cultural life of our communities and built environments. These places include but are not limited to libraries, museums, galleries, performance spaces, artist studios, rehearsal and practice spaces, event spaces (indoor and outdoor) and music venues. They can also include places for cultural practice and community connection.

The MCIS has been developed to build upon the vision set out in Creative Melville 2018 – 2022, namely:

Creative Melville is about realising the City's cultural potential, strengthening our collective identity and empowerment through learning, information and creativity.

The role of cultural infrastructure (and associated programming) is to help realise Melville's potential as a place for creative people and industry, and where people everywhere can explore their creativity.

The MCIS is underpinned by the idea that culture, creativity and community are inextricably linked. Further, the MCIS builds upon three key strategic observations and opportunities identified in the development of this report.

The first, **"City and Neighbourhood Exchange"** is a guiding strategy to ensure the City has a thriving centre (focused around the proposed Library and Cultural Centre /LCC) and locally responsive and engaged neighbourhood hubs. Neighbourhood hubs are proposed as *'cultural convergers'*, combining a number of functions and spaces into more flexible and dynamic places. These should be in a constant state of exchange and dialogue, encouraging people to connect their local level, and through the city centre to cultural activities on the national and international stage.

The second, **"A Cultural Continuum"**, has been developed to create lifelong journeys and pathways within cultural activities, practice, and production. It will create places and spaces for people to experience art, music, performance, making and other forms of cultural activity as first-time participants, emerging and experienced audiences through to master-classes and emeritus practitioners. Cultural Infrastructure may have a focus on one group but be able to adapt and respond across this continuum to ensure that all infrastructure can enhance user's journeys and cultural development.

The final strategy, **"A City of Many Cultures"**, is an overlay across all projects that celebrates the rich diversity of cultures found in Melville – from indigenous practices (both ancient and living) to more recent cultural arrivals since European settlement of the Swan River Colony. Acknowledging the rich tapestry of cultures

that make up Melville will enable harmonious and productive relationships across all cultural practices in Melville.

The MCIS offers a generational opportunity to redefine Melville as a future-focused city for everyone. The Strategy builds on the city's strengths within a framework that celebrates 'hyper-local' neighbourhoods with a thriving city centre – the blueprint for most great cities around the world!

When the Strategy has been implemented Melville will become a place where cultural activity and engagement thrives at all scales – from local, community-based initiatives through to national and international events.

Arts and culture – from professional performance through to weekend hobbies – provide a platform for people to unite, heal, share, generate income, and expand experience. By implementing this Strategy, the City will have a unique and recognisable cultural identity beloved by its residents and embraced warmly by visitors.

As MJ Elson notes, *'spaces for culture and the arts play a vital role in social and economic regeneration.'*¹ Never is this sentiment more relevant than now as cities and communities seek to adjust and redefine themselves optimistically in a post-pandemic world.



Freedom Skate, Yagan Mia Wireless Hill Museum, 2021.

1. Elson, MJ. *'The Community Infrastructure Levy.'* Arts Council England, 2012

The Strategy Proposes:

Guiding Strategies

The **document** addresses key strategies to guide development across all Cultural Infrastructure projects in the City. The MCIS is designed for all Guiding Strategies to be interrelated and overlapping. All three should be addressed equitably and simultaneously in the development of Cultural Infrastructure.

01. City + Neighbourhood Exchange:

- The City of Melville will have both a thriving central locus and a series of neighbourhood hubs that respond to the needs of their surrounding community. The centre and the neighbourhoods are in constant dialogue and creative exchange.

02. A Cultural Continuum:

- Cultural infrastructure will support a continuum of cultural production, experiences and learning across communities, localities, and demographics.

03. A City of Many Cultures:

- Cultural Infrastructure will celebrate and support the diverse communities within the City of Melville, and enable exchange, interaction, and harmonious relationships between all cultures.

Transformational Moves:

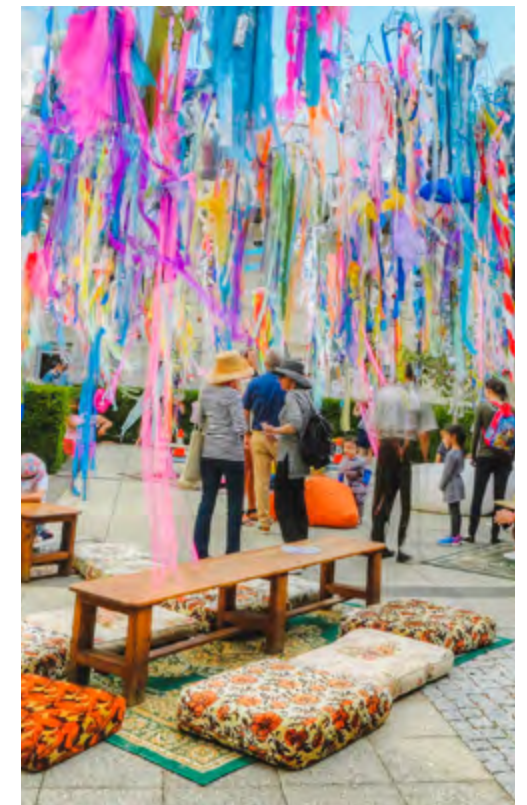
A series of interconnected, place-based and catalytic 'moves' that will enable the Strategy to be implemented:

- The development of a new city precinct that extends from the civic heart at Booragoon to the assemblage of cultural facilities at Yagan Mia Wireless Hill through to the Hickey Street Cottages. A core catalyst is the proposed LCC, which underpins the ability for the City to leverage its neighbourhood networks. This project will provide the City with the strong cultural core that is needed for a modern city to thrive.
- The transformation of libraries from standalone assets into thriving neighbourhood hubs combining traditional library services with the flexibility and space offered by a community centre. The approach will be based on local need and the unique opportunities offered at each site.
- Increase the use of outdoor places and spaces for cultural activity. Extend programming from the river foreshore through to the less active parks south of Leach Highway, using temporary infrastructure.
- Develop a series of low-cost structures with low barriers to entry for experimental cultural activity. This move has been developed in response to global and national trends and should be used to ensure greater access, activation and participation at the four nominated sites.

Asset Specific Actions

An itemised series of detailed guidance for each of the City's nominated existing cultural infrastructure **has been created**. Each asset has been reviewed through site visits, staff interviews and user engagement.

This section **of the Strategy** also includes provisional programming of works, including potential 'quick wins' and independent budget estimates.



Jill OMeehan, MERGE Festival, City of Melville, 2017.

Background

Overview

The City of Melville ('City') is a desirable place to live and work, and a leader in the delivery of high-quality cultural events and programming. Its program of cultural events and activities are well attended, and its libraries experience enviable attendance and engagement. Another great strength is Melville's culturally diverse population, ranging from First Nations people through to communities of first-generation Australians.

The City has a number of integrated strategies that provide guidance and have influenced this project, including Creative Melville 2018 – 2022 and the City's Infrastructure Strategy 2016 – 2036. Many of the cultural venues and facilities within Melville are Council-owned and therefore may be adapted to suit the evolving needs of local communities by using this document. Private facilities are located through the City and have been considered, but are limited for the City in relation to their ability to influence and direct both programming and access.

The City of Melville has also committed to a series of actions and opportunities under its 'Stretch' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP, 2017 – 2021) There are a number of possible alignments within this Strategy to the Respect, Relationships and Opportunities outlined in the RAP.

The Melville Cultural Infrastructure Strategy (MCIS or 'the Strategy') supports and augments the creative vision of the City by creating a framework for the enhancement of cultural infrastructure that it can most directly influence and direct.

Benchmarking

Local Governments manage and maintain a wide variety of infrastructure across their geographical boundaries, and many of these have undergone significant change as populations shift and technology and communities adapt to contemporary lifestyle aspirations.

It is important to note however that strategies for upgrading existing, and delivering new Cultural Infrastructure are relatively uncommon in Local Government Areas in Australia. The MCIS positions the City of Melville as a national leader in this regard, with a focus on emerging trends and enhancing its existing strength and diversity of cultural practice.

The City's geographical boundary contains a wide array of open spaces, parklands, cultural facilities, museums, galleries, multi-functional spaces, as well as well attended libraries and community centres.

Understanding demographics and the needs of communities in relation to these kinds of spaces is an emerging field of study, and unlike other infrastructure (i.e. sporting infrastructure such as change rooms and playing fields), cultural infrastructure does not have readily available generalised spatial benchmarking to assess the quantity, quality and types of facilities needed to support vibrant, connected, and creative communities.

Analysis and Inputs

The outcomes recommended by this Strategy are informed by a wide array of research, analysis, and guiding policy documents, including (but not limited to):

The findings outlined in the WA Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+, along with the City of Melville guiding documents:

- The vision endorsed in Creative Melville 2018 – 2022
 - City of Melville Public Art Strategy & Masterplan, City of Melville and FORM
 - Strategic Community Plan; Engaging with our diverse community to achieve an inclusive, vibrant and sustainable future 2020-2030, 2019.
 - City of Melville Active Reserve Infrastructure Strategy, Dave Lanfear Consulting, 2020.
 - Your Future Library in the City of Melville Survey Result
 - City of Melville Infrastructure Strategy 2016-36 'Keeping the City Connected'
 - Other relevant activity plans, visions and surveys.
 - Research and analysis of international, national, and local precedents related to cultural, community and creative infrastructure
 - Field study of the City's existing cultural and community infrastructure and research related to demographics and usage
 - Community sentiment, feedback and aspirations as revealed through extensive surveys, workshops and interviews, as well as discussion with City staff and analysis of existing programs.
- Five focus areas have been prioritised to meet the outcomes and take advantage of the opportunities identified. These focus areas are broad so that as trends and needs change, WA will be flexible enough to adapt accordingly. The five focus areas are:*
- 1 Maintain and celebrate WA's Aboriginal art, culture and heritage
 - 2 Optimise existing cultural assets
 - 3 Holistic cultural infrastructure planning
 - 4 Incentivise private investment
 - 5 Understand and measure the public value of cultural infrastructure

Alignment to WA Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+

The MCIS seeks to align infrastructure planning and delivery with the WA Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+. The three Guiding Strategies support and promote the five focus areas of this state Strategy noted below:

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How was the Strategy developed?

The development of the MCIS involved several stages, including:

- Literature review and background information
- Identification of current and future trends, best practice and standards and guidelines within the arts & cultural industry
- Consultation and engagement with both internal and external community stakeholders
- Review and mapping of existing facilities and assets
- Review of the community and cultural groups that currently use these assets
- Study of current population and projected growth rates
- Consideration of First Nations cultural heritage
- Study of the diverse populations that make up the City of Melville, including Aboriginal, Chinese and South-East Asian communities
- Study of demographics related to age and cultural interest
- Mapping of proposed locations for new and/or transformed facilities and assets.
- Analysis of the hierarchy and relationship between cultural facilities within the City of Melville, regional and state systems
- Development of high-level sketches to demonstrate the potential of facilities in terms of usage, capacity, scale and audience
- Indicative costing over 20 years for use in the City's long term financial plan (prepared by an independent Quantity Surveyor)
- Data to inform business cases for the renewal or development of new facilities including heritage spaces
- Identification partnership opportunities
- Plan that outlines the priority of works over a 20-year period.



Figure - Three concentric circles can be used to describe the intention of the MCIS. The inner circle with the single most important part of the cultural infrastructure, creating culture for everyone, everywhere in Melville. The second concentric circle identify emergent national and international trends to create the best and most inclusive cultural infrastructure and have been used to create the third concentric circle, the guiding strategies that define this strategy. All of the circles need to work in concert and are dependent on each other to achieve the 20 year plan.