



THE ARTS, OUR CULTURE & THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Position Statement for the Arts, Culture & Creative Industries articulates local governments' commitment because the *Arts and Our Culture Are Essential*.

Victorian councils are a major stakeholder of arts and culture and are responsible for some 277 public library branches, 39 art galleries, 47 performing arts centres; and numerous sites of Aboriginal heritage, museums, and creative spaces including town halls, community centres, rehearsal rooms, artist studios, and business hubs.

Local government has long recognised the invaluable contribution arts, culture and the creative industries make to local employment, community wellbeing and vitality, tourism and economic development, and we will continue to invest in this essential service.

The MAV is a membership association and the legislated peak body for local government in Victoria, representing all 79 councils. On behalf of Victorian councils, the MAV and Creative Victoria are committed to placing the creative industries at the forefront of our state's future growth, prosperity and liveability.

This commitment drives investment in infrastructure such as galleries, museums, performing arts venues and libraries; as well as festivals and events, public art projects and cultural programming, strategic planning, education, youth, heritage, diversity and Indigenous enterprise and career pathways.

JOBS & GROWTH

Australia's creative and cultural economy contributes more than \$111 billion or 6.4% of our country's total gross domestic product (GDP), and employs close to 600,000 people or 5.5% of the workforce. Victoria represents 3% of Australia's total land mass, but significantly punches about its weight delivering 22% of national GDP.

Victoria's burgeoning creative sector delivers strong and consistent growth: supporting 260,000 jobs, up 15% in four years and critically contributing \$31 billion - or about 8%, to the Victorian economy. These figures are even more impressive when we see that this equates to 34% of the national creative economy.



TOURISM

International cultural tourism in Victoria is experiencing exponential growth. In 2017 cultural tourism brought in \$2 billion – a whopping increase of 88% from 2013. In 2018 there were 56 million daytrips taken to or within Victoria, an increase of 29% since 2014, with 3.7 million of these including an arts activity. There is no doubt that drought, bushfires and the rising impact of coronavirus are having a significant impact on cultural tourism, but local governments are crucial to ensure regions remain welcoming, inclusive, culturally vibrant - and a key tool to promote economic recovery.

The creative sector delivers important sustainable and long-term benefits across regional and metropolitan Victoria, with local government vital to the realisation of these benefits. The Cultural Funding by Government Australia 2017-18 report highlights councils' considerable investment at almost 30% of the total national local government expenditure. In addition to major cultural infrastructure and its maintenance, this investment supports development and presentation of arts content and programming, grant funded projects, community collaborations, small creative businesses, professional training and education, strategic planning and marketing.

WHAT'S NEXT

Victorian councils have a leading role in strengthening and leveraging the arts and creative industries to heal and rebuild communities, and provide vital economic, social, cultural, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Local government-managed creative and cultural facilities have been severely impacted by ongoing drought, devastating bushfires, as well as stringent lockdown restrictions caused by COVID-19. For now, the new normal means the gradual easing of restrictions will still prevent large gatherings and full-houses, but councils are working collaboratively with industry to restore our creative programs, enhance our cultural offerings and ensure our communities have access to the arts that nourish and connect us all.

As restrictions ease, councils are working hard to develop efficiencies and links to bolster programs and infrastructure development and delivery. This will be achieved through adopting adaptive frameworks that stimulate local economies through cultural tourism, improving amenity, and supporting creative endeavour. Officers will collaborate across council departments to identify programs that reconnect communities, stimulate creativity and encourage people to participate.

Local governments are perfectly positioned to work with stakeholders at the local level, inspire community appreciation for the arts, provide integrated frameworks for growth and offer income pathways for artists, so all Victorians can all enjoy the cultural, economic, social, health and wellbeing benefits that the creative sector provides.





STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Local governments understand that the *Arts Are Essential* and will build on their substantial investment across the creative sector by collaborating with Governments and experts, identifying opportunities to strengthen the arts and creative industries, and facilitating positive social, cultural, economic and health and wellbeing outcomes.

Program Development

Leverage councils' local level positioning and their relationship with community and the creative sector to collaboratively design and trial programs and initiatives that promote aboriginal career development, economic enterprise and cultural attractions;

Visitor Economy

Produce and facilitate high quality arts experiences, live music, exhibitions and cultural attractions to build cultural tourism;

Education

Establish opportunities, pathways and mentorships for primary, secondary and tertiary students and foster lifelong learning in informal and formal settings;

Social Inclusion

Increase engagement and representation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) artists and communities;

Health and wellbeing

Support festivals and events that bring us together and celebrate our culture, and collaborate with artists to design programs that stimulate and fulfil us as individuals;

Business Development

Co-design sophisticated, progressive and integrated networks that are inclusive of council officers, industry and business;

State-wide Framework

Develop a fertile ecosystem by facilitating strategic plans and holistic support for clusters of councils so that resources can be shared, local talent is fostered, and the arts and creative industries flourish across council and State borders.

Arts Appreciation

Generate evidence-based resources, cultural impact measurement tools, as well as host tailored workshops, forums and opportunities to engender value of the creative sector;

Placemaking

Strengthen communities and revitalise local economies by creating spaces and places where people want to be;

Access

Champion affordable transport to and from arts activities and cultural attractions and develop pathways for private partnerships to increase access to all this State has to offer.



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