

DISCUSSION PAPER

Culture and Creativity



North Sydney's next ten years
HAVE YOUR SAY



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RECOGNITION OF THE CAMMERAYGAL PEOPLE

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of North Sydney local government area (LGA), the Cammeraygal people

We recognise the Cammeraygal people as the Traditional Owners of the area known today as North Sydney. We acknowledge that the alienation of Cammeraygal Country followed the first local land grant in 1794 which occurred without consultation, treaty, or compensation.

Western archaeological evidence shows that Aboriginal people lived in the North Sydney area at least 5,800 years ago, and likely for thousands more. That evidence is precious. We seek to preserve it and through that to better understand Cammeraygal connection to Country.

After North Sydney Council was formed in 1890 through the merging of three boroughs, the word Cammeraygal was included on its coat of arms. Today it holds a central position in the Council's logo as a reminder of the long and ongoing Indigenous heritage of this place.

In recent years the spelling of Cammeraygal has varied to include Gammaraigal and Gai-maragal as our community has sought to reflect and honour the heritage of First Nations people in a more culturally appropriate manner.

Shaping the future of culture and creativity in North Sydney

Purpose of this paper

North Sydney Council (Council) is committed to fostering a vibrant, diverse and inclusive cultural and creative sector that enriches the lives of our community, including residents, workers, visitors and investors. As part of this commitment, Council is delivering a Culture and Creativity Strategy.

This Discussion Paper presents information to guide community consultation about culture and creativity in North Sydney. It highlights some of strengths, challenges and strategic opportunities within the North Sydney local government area (LGA) and encourages thinking about where we are now, where we want to be in the future and how we will get there.

The information collected through consultation will help to identify the needs and aspirations of the North Sydney community over the next ten years and will be used to develop the Culture and Creativity Strategy.

The Culture and Creativity Strategy is one of eight Informing Strategies being prepared by Council that together will consider needs and priorities in the following key areas:

- Culture and Creativity
- Environment
- Economic Development
- Governance
- Housing
- Integrated Transport
- Open Space and Recreation
- Social Inclusion

Once prepared, these eight Informing Strategies will be combined to form our new 2025-2035 Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Programs and Operational Plans. They will determine our priorities and ensure that Council's resources are focused on delivering outcomes needed and wanted by our community.

Get involved

We have a number of opportunities for the community to provide feedback, including:

Do the online survey

Complete our 15-minute online survey to provide your feedback and ideas about culture and creativity in North Sydney.

Attend a community forum

Join us for the Culture and Creativity Community Forum on Tuesday 18 June (6pm-7.30pm) at Hutley Hall where an expert panel will discuss the future of culture and creativity in North Sydney.

Drop in for a chat

You will find Council staff at local markets and CBD pop-up stalls in the coming weeks, listening to your feedback and answering questions.

For more information

Scan the QR Code or visit yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/our-next-ten-years



What is culture and creativity?

Culture is a concept that can be difficult to define. It is often understood as a system of values that we share with other people, and which give us a shared sense of belonging. In North Sydney, we have a unique cultural identity that is reflected in our creativity, our diverse stories, our heritage and beliefs, our places and spaces, as well as our art in all of its forms.

We believe culture is for everyone in the North Sydney community, not just those who identify as a 'creative'. Cultural and creative activities bring our community together, whether it is enjoying or making music, theatre, dancing, writing, visual arts, digital media and games, our heritage, design, fashion or participating in community festivals and events.

The figure below demonstrates the types of cultural and creative activities, spaces and places we are considering as part of the Strategy:

In North Sydney we recognise, enable and celebrate First Nations culture

Culture and creativity in Australia are grounded in the material heritage, practices and knowledges of First Nations peoples, who possess the world's longest surviving cultures. In the Uluru Statement from the Heart, First Nations peoples call for a future where their children 'will walk in two worlds, and their culture will be a gift to their country'.

For First Nations peoples, culture encompasses knowledges held, shared and continually adapted, including language, music, dance, stories, songlines and songspirals, and visual art. Culture is central to the health, wellbeing and identity of First Nations peoples. Culture is governed by sophisticated systems of knowledge.

(Source: Revive: Australia's National Cultural Policy)



The value of culture and creativity

North Sydney Council recognises the value of culture and creativity in enhancing social cohesion, driving economic development, and supporting civic identity in our area.

Community identity and connection

Inclusive creative opportunities can increase community identity, cohesion and belonging^{1,2}. In high-density urban areas where people are more likely to live alone, creative activities can bring people together around shared experiences.

Health and wellbeing

Studies have found links between cultural and creative participation, and increased longevity, better health and higher life satisfaction^{3,4,5}. Not only does being creative support self-expression, it enables us to connect to others thereby boosting our wellbeing.

Liveability and attractiveness

Unique and diverse cultural and creative events, venues and programs help to position North Sydney as a cultural destination where there is something for everyone. This plays an important role in attracting people to live, work and visit North Sydney.

Resilient local economies

A vibrant and diverse cultural and creative ecosystem can help drive local economic prosperity and growth, including through attracting visitors, creating jobs, and attracting and retaining businesses.

Lifelong learning and skills

Participating in creative activities supports lifelong learning for people of all ages^{6,7}. In particular, this has been linked to improved educational outcomes in English, mathematics and science. The 21st century knowledge-based economy will increasingly require workers to be creative and collaborative.

Reconciliation

Culture and creativity play an important role in fostering reconciliation. Through cultural expression, First Nations communities can preserve their history, language and stories and share them with the world. This can promote connection to Country, healing, truth-telling, economic empowerment and intergenerational knowledge sharing.

Did you know...

7 in 10

Australians agree that cultural and creative experiences make for a richer and more meaningful life.

7 in 10

Australians agree that cultural and creative experiences help you to understand perspectives that are different to your own.

6 in 10

Australians agree that cultural and creative experiences can positively impact our sense of wellbeing and happiness and can help us deal with stress, anxiety or depression.

(Source: National Arts Participation Survey, Creative Australia, 2022)



In Australia, the arts and entertainment sector contributes

\$14.7 billion

per year in value added (GDP).

In Australia, for every million dollars in turnover, arts and entertainment produce

9 jobs

while the construction industry only produces around 1 job.

(Source: Economic importance of arts and entertainment sector, The Australia Institute, 2020)

The roles of Council, community and partners

Council plays an important role in strengthening the local cultural life of North Sydney by providing cultural leadership and advocacy, developing cultural policies and plans and delivering and managing cultural infrastructure and services.

However, with limited resources, Council needs to work in close partnership with other levels of government, the community, private sector and other stakeholders to deliver sustainable outcomes.

This Study will outline a framework for Council, community and partners to work together to achieve our community's vision for the future of culture and creativity in North Sydney, including opportunities for improved collaboration and coordination, recognising that we all have a role to play in enhancing the cultural and creative life of North Sydney.

The roles of Council

Lead and advocate

- Research and engage with our community to understand cultural and creative needs and aspirations
- Advocate to other agencies and levels of government to secure funding and resources to support culture and creativity

Plan and regulate

- Develop policies and plans that respond to our community's cultural and creative needs
- Align decision-making to the cultural values, needs and aspirations of our community

Build partnerships and skills

- Collaborate with other agencies and organisations to achieve shared goals
- Unlock capacity within our community by connecting people to skills, resources and each other

Provide infrastructure and services

- Manage and deliver Council-owned places and spaces that support cultural and creative participation
- Deliver, support and promote cultural and creative programs, events and activities
- Support community groups and organisations through grants and in-kind support

Local Partners:

Community members
Artists and creatives
Business owners
Community groups
Privately owned galleries,
museums and collections
Philanthropists

National Partners:

Australian
Government
Creative Australia
Music Australia
National Trust

State Partners:

NSW Government
Create NSW
NSW State Library
Museums & Galleries NSW



About North Sydney

Our place

Located on the northern side of Sydney Harbour on Cammeraygal land, North Sydney is known for its high-density residential and commercial areas, as well as its leafy character, and its parks and recreational spaces.

North Sydney has a rich and long history. Its historic structures and landscapes, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous archaeological sites, parks, reserves and street patterns contribute to the unique character, liveability, culture and distinctiveness of the area.

The map below shows North Sydney's 14 suburbs.



Our community

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Estimated Resident Population, in 2023 the North Sydney LGA was home to 72,014 residents. Into the future, our population is forecast to grow by at least 14% to 78,973 by 2036.

As shown in Figure 1, in the 2021 ABS census, proportionally compared to Greater Sydney:

We have more residents living in apartments and living alone, particularly along our coastline and near train stations. Participating in cultural and creative activities can support apartment dwellers to connect to their neighbours, and support positive health and wellbeing outcomes and a sense of belonging.

We have a large young workforce, as well as lots of workers that live outside our area but travel to North Sydney every work day. Our working aged people need opportunities to participate and connect outside of work hours and on the weekend.

We are highly educated and have relatively higher household incomes. These are strengths that our community can leverage in evolving our cultural offering into the future.

We are becoming more culturally diverse. Different cultures can enrich our creative landscape, and it is important that programs, events and activities reflect and cater to diverse preferences and needs.

We have creative businesses and jobs. North Sydney has 257 businesses in the arts and recreation services industry*, (1.7% vs 1.5% in Greater Sydney). In comparison, the Inner West LGA has 3.9%, while the City of Sydney has 1.7%.

We have fewer residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Council is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives, and celebrating First Nations heritage.

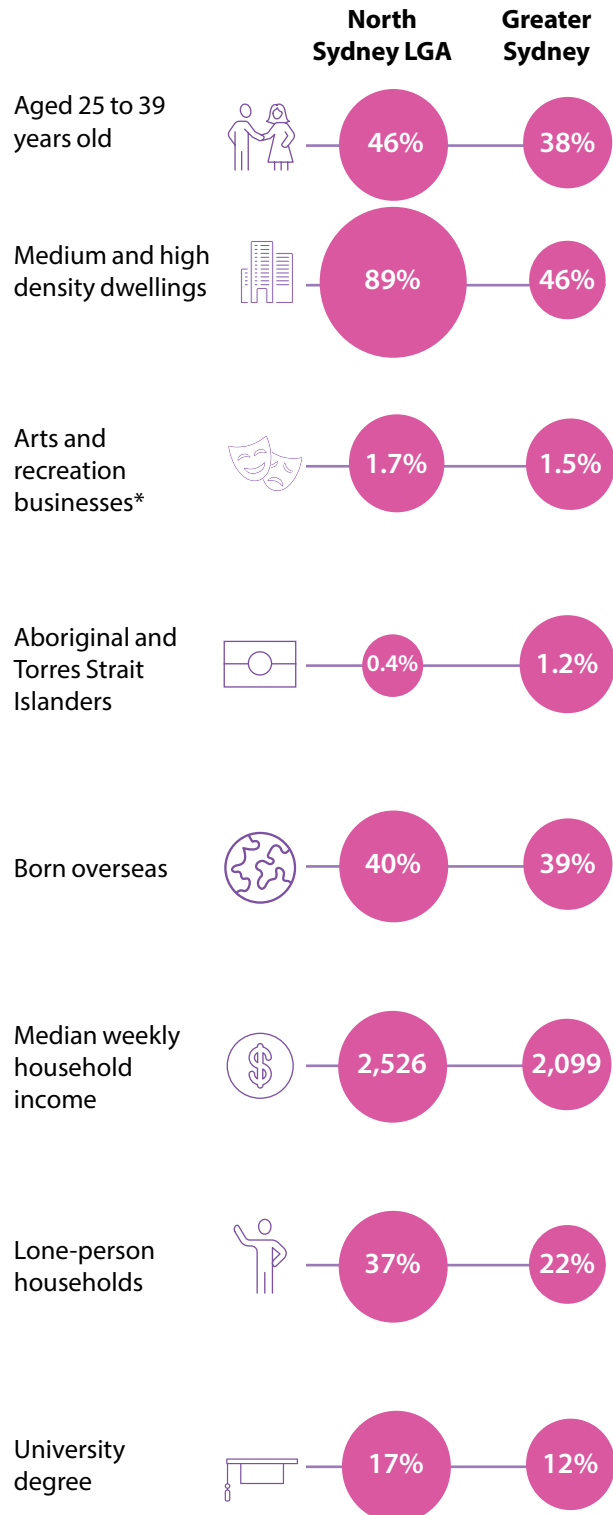


Figure 1 - 2021 ABS Census, North Sydney vs Greater Sydney.

*Arts and recreation services includes heritage, creative and performing arts and sport and recreation activities.

Culture and creativity is a strength for North Sydney

North Sydney is home to a thriving arts and cultural ecosystem, including unique places and spaces, events, programs, activities, heritage stories, organisations, businesses and community groups that reflect our vibrant and creative spirit.

Importantly this includes cultural facilities and programs provided by Council, as well as by other private and not-for-profit organisations and our many active community groups.

As part of the North Sydney Culture and Creativity Strategy, it's important for us to understand our current cultural and creative attributes, so we can build on our strengths, and identify gaps and challenges.

Did you know...

North Sydney has long attracted artists, writers, performers and other creatives who have helped shape our cultural and creative landscape into what it is today.

In the 19th and early 20th century our foreshores attracted artists such as Conrad Martens, Arthur Streeton, Lionel Lindsay, Roland Wakelin and Lloyd Rees. Writer May Gibbs lived and worked in Neutral Bay from 1914 to 1969.

By the 1970s, Brett Whiteley made Lavender Bay home and the views from his house were depicted in some of his most famous works. A community of artists formed there including Tim Storrier and Peter Kingston. Kingston worked with Martin Sharp on the 1970s refurbishment of Luna Park following the retirement of long-term resident artist Arthur Barton. His artworks of North Sydney and the Harbour have immense local and regional significance.



Some of our strengths

Our location

Our location on Sydney Harbour is one of our most valuable attributes. Harbourside cultural offerings, including the iconic Luna Park, attract residents and workers as well as visitors from across Sydney and overseas. Our public transport connections enable us to access opportunities across North Sydney and beyond.

Our spaces and places

Our diverse cultural and community facilities and public spaces support creative participation, ranging from the Coal Loader, to Stanton Library, to laneways and plazas with potential for activation, alongside non-Council-managed community centres, theatres, galleries and public spaces such as Wendy Whiteley's Secret Garden.

Our creative community

We have an active and diverse community of artists, writers, performers and makers driving an exciting cultural landscape that is supported by Council initiatives such as artist studios, artisan markets and the North Sydney Art Prize.

Our creative organisations

We are home to cultural and creative organisations such as Studio A, Ensemble Theatre, Royal Art Society of NSW, North Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and Primrose Park Arts and Craft Centre, alongside support for cultural groups through community centres.

Our creative businesses

North Sydney is home to a number of privately owned creative studios and businesses. This includes music studios, dance studios, book shops, visual arts studios, pottery studios, cinemas and commercial galleries.

Our heritage

We have a rich tapestry of moveable, built and landscape heritage, including First Nations sites, colonial-era and 20th century buildings, and historical collections and archives.

First Nations culture and peoples

First Nations people have called North Sydney home for tens of thousands of years. We are lucky to have several sites of heritage including engravings at Balls Head and Berry Island. North Sydney also supports the yearly Gai-mariagal Festival, a month-long festival taking place from Sorry Day to National Reconciliation Week that provides the community an opportunity to learn more about First Nations living culture.

Our programs and events

North Sydney has a diverse array of cultural and creative events, programs, and festivals catering to community participation and enjoyment, spanning from grassroots initiatives to large-scale productions.

Council offers a diverse program of events including concerts, plays, the North Sydney Art Prize, writer talks, food fairs, markets, creative workshops, heritage events and tours, and more.

North Sydney is home to:

15+

Creative community groups

in a range of areas including visual arts, photography, history, music, writing and books, film and textiles.

4

Artist studios

including Primrose Park, Ridge Street, the Coal Loader and Alfred Street run by Council.

4

Museums

including Don Bank Museum and Sexton's Cottage Museum run by Council, Nutcote supported by Council, and Mary Mackillop Place Museum.

5

Galleries

including Ridge Street Window Gallery run by Council and private galleries.

6

Markets

including Kirribilli Markets and Northside Produce Markets.

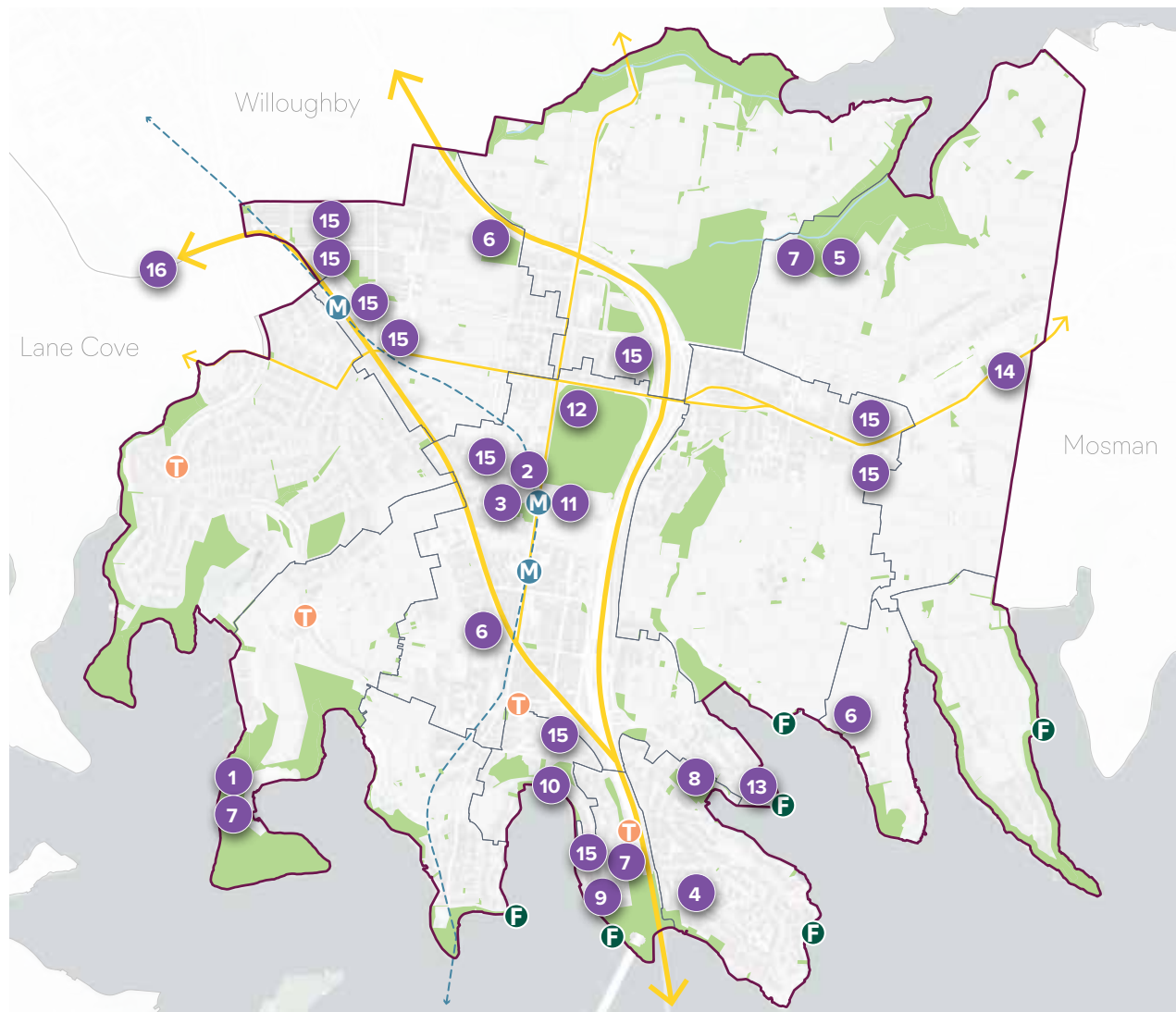
300+

Programs and events

delivered by Council including those at the Coal Loader and Stanton Library.

Snapshot of North Sydney's cultural and creative spaces

The map below shows a selection of North Sydney's cultural and creative spaces, both Council and non-Council.



<p>1. Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability Offers tours, workshops, events and exhibitions as well as artist studios, artisan markets and Sydney Library of Things.</p>	<p>9. Luna Park Heritage-listed amusement park with a performance space.</p>
<p>2. Stanton Library / North Sydney Heritage Centre Council-run library and heritage centre providing public programs, exhibitions and collections.</p>	<p>10. Wendy Whiteley's Secret Garden Public garden with winding paths and event space.</p>
<p>3. North Sydney Community Centre Not-for-profit organisation providing creative workshops, events, exhibitions and festivals.</p>	<p>11. The Independent Theatre A heritage-listed venue operated by Wenona School.</p>
<p>4. Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre Not-for-profit organisation providing creative workshops, events, exhibitions and festivals.</p>	<p>12. Music Shell, St Leonards Park A two-level building with a stage area, practice room and storage.</p>
<p>5. Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre Multi-functional facility home to various art and craft groups.</p>	<p>13. Sub Base Platypus A former torpedo factor, submarine base and gas works that is now a community recreation and work hub.</p>
<p>6. Heritage museums Including Don Bank Museum and Sexton's Cottage Museum run by Council, Nutcote supported by Council, and Mary Mackillop Place Museum.</p>	<p>14. Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace A heritage-listed independent art deco cinema, featuring movies, live shows and events.</p>
<p>7. Council-run Artist studios Including at Primrose Park, the Coal Loader and Alfred Street.</p>	<p>15. Non-Council organisations, studios and galleries Including Royal Art Society of NSW, Studio A, Australian Writers Centre, Big Music Studios, Seaborn, Broughton & Walford Foundation, Makers Loft, Art Box Workshops, Australian Cinematographers Society, the creative precinct in St Leonards and Faber Writing Academy among others.</p>
<p>8. Ensemble Theatre Australia's longest running professional theatre company, also offering public education programs.</p>	<p>16. Bradfield College A government-funded school specialising in the creative industries located that is outside our LGA boundaries but contributes locally.</p>

Themes to guide discussion

This section presents our issues and opportunities for the future under the following themes:

1. Culture and creativity for everyone

2. Spaces and places for participation and production

3. Supporting and partnering with the creative sector

4. Sharing our diverse stories

5. North Sydney as a cultural and creative destination

6. Investing in culture and creativity

1

Culture and creativity for everyone

What is this theme about?

Culture and creativity is important to the North Sydney community. Many of our residents are long-term and passionate supporters of cultural activities and organisations, whether this be as audience members, volunteers, or as writers, performers, dancers or visual artists themselves.

We are fortunate to have a large number of community-led cultural and creative groups in North Sydney that stimulate creativity and spearhead local initiatives.

At the same time, some people in our community may experience barriers to participating in cultural and creative activities. We want everyone in our community, regardless of their age, ability, background or income, to feel welcome and be able to access opportunities to participate.

As our community grows and changes and our places become increasingly densely populated, its important to plan for and ensure our investment enables arts and cultural programs and services that reflect our residents' changing needs and preferences. We recognise the benefits this will have for social cohesion and inclusion in our community.



Issues and opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were identified through background research and interviews with industry stakeholders and Council staff.

Reducing barriers to participation

North Sydney residents may experience barriers to participating in culture and creativity, including a lack of awareness of what is on offer and how they can get involved, timing of activities, cost of participation and a lack of offerings that appeal to their needs. Some groups may be more likely to experience these barriers, such as young people, seniors, new residents, people with disability and those from lower socioeconomic households.

To ensure everyone in our community can participate in culture and creativity, we need to consider ways to reduce these barriers. This might include having events and programs at different times including after work, at night and on weekends, providing affordable and free events and programs and making sure these take place in spaces that are accessible by public transport and inclusive for all.

As part of developing this Strategy, we want to hear about the types of cultural and creative activities that would encourage people to participate.



I want North Sydney to be a place where everyone can enjoy and express their culture and creativity

North Sydney community member

Encouraging social connections through culture and creativity

The importance of having strong social connections with our friends, family and neighbours was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. As our North Sydney community grows and more of our residents live alone, there is opportunity for us to focus on the role of cultural and creative activities in community development, social cohesion and bringing people together around shared interests to combat social isolation.

Raising awareness of our cultural and creative offering

There are many cultural programs, events and places on offer in North Sydney, but not everyone in our community knows about them. There is an opportunity to promote our existing offerings more broadly to attract a wider range of residents and workers to participate, as well as visitors from outside the LGA.

This could include better promotion through Council channels such as social media or the community newsletter, or partnering with other organisations and events. As part of developing this Strategy, we want to understand how our community would like to find out about local activities.



You can have the best offerings in the world but if people don't know they won't come.

North Sydney community member



Inspiration we can draw on: Flavours of Auburn, Cumberland City Council



Image source: Shon Ho via Broadsheet

Flavours of Auburn is a community enterprise that connects people, communities and cultures through a shared love for food. A partnership between Cumberland Council, the Auburn Small Community Organisation Network (ASCON), House of Welcome and local Auburn businesses, Flavours of Auburn offers cooking classes and walking food tours. In cooking classes, local cooks share recipes and ingredients from their culture as participants cook, talk and eat together. In walking food tours, local tour guides introduce participants to Auburn’s diverse food culture and to local small business owners who share their food and their stories. The initiative not only provides an opportunity to learn and experience other cultures but serves as a unique tourism attraction showcasing Auburn’s rich food culture.

Inspiration we can draw on: What’s On website, City of Sydney



The City of Sydney’s What’s On website serves as a central hub for residents and visitors to access information about diverse cultural events and activities across the City. The interactive, user-friendly website allows people to search through a range of programs by topic, location and date to see what suits their needs and interests. The platform promotes increased engagement in Sydney’s cultural life, celebrates diversity, and helps to foster community connections through culture and creativity.



Let's have a discussion...

- What gets in the way of you participating in culture and creativity in North Sydney (more regularly)?
- What are the best methods for North Sydney Council to promote cultural and creative programs and activities to reach everyone in the community?
- What types of cultural and creative events and programs would you like to see more of in North Sydney?
- How can we support everyone in our community to participate, including:
 - children, young people, families and older people
 - people from culturally diverse backgrounds
 - First Nations people
 - people living alone or at risk of social isolation
 - workers in North Sydney, particularly the younger workforce (21-35)
- How can we support a healthy and safe night-time economy in North Sydney?

Provide your feedback by taking our online survey:

yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/our-next-ten-years



2

Spaces and places to enable participation and production

What is this theme about?

Having access to venues, facilities and spaces supports community participation in culture and creativity. It also enables visual artists, writers, performers, dancers and other creatives to produce and showcase their work.

As part of this Strategy, we are considering issues and opportunities related to a broad range of spaces and places, including Council and non-Council owned facilities and public spaces. This can include formal facilities such as theatres, galleries and museums, as well as public spaces such as plazas, laneways and parks.

We want to understand how people use our spaces and places for culture and creativity now, and what the needs and possibilities are for the future, whether this be upgrades to existing spaces, or delivering new creative spaces in partnership.



Issues and opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were identified through background research and interviews with industry stakeholders and Council staff.

Making our existing cultural and creative spaces fit-for-purpose

Council owns and manages a range of venues and facilities in North Sydney, however these are generally not fit-for-purpose to host cultural and creative activities, such as exhibitions or performances.

We know there is a need to upgrade some of our spaces if we are to appropriately support community participation, creative production and storage of Council's historical and art collections in North Sydney. We also know that there is a need to review our current fees and charges policies to unlock access to existing facilities for our community.

Into the future, there is also opportunity to embed and enable flexible cultural uses within multipurpose community facilities as these are upgraded to increase local provision of creative spaces across our area.

As part of this Strategy, we are interested to hear from the community about barriers to accessing existing cultural facilities and where there may be opportunities to retrofit existing spaces.



I'd love to see dedicated purpose-built creative spaces that offer opportunities for artists of all types to work, explore and deliver programs for the community. This would be across all forms of art.

North Sydney community member

Did you know...

- Over 90% of people surveyed said having **spaces to rehearse or develop artistic practice** is important.
- The most significant cultural infrastructure challenges in NSW are **affordability, condition of spaces, functionality, accessibility and availability**.

(Source: Create NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+)

Delivering new creative spaces, with opportunity to leverage development

Our community and local creatives have told us that there are some gaps in our current network of cultural and creative spaces, including limited rehearsal spaces, artist studios and exhibition spaces, among others.

We have significant opportunities through planning and development, particularly around the Metro line, to deliver more creative spaces to meet the needs of our increasingly dense communities. This could be through leveraging contributions from private developers.

There are also opportunities to leverage planning precincts, major development, partnerships with State and Federal agencies, major arts institutions and private philanthropy to improve the provision of cultural infrastructure in our area. In particular, there is opportunity for the Culture and Creativity Strategy to inform planning for a proposed cultural space in St Leonards, which is currently in the early design phase, as well as planning for the Neutral Bay Town Centre which identifies a need for new plazas and community spaces.

Ridge Street Laneway Mural Designed by Jessica Birk and Frances Belle-Parker (Image: Document Photography)

Activating our public spaces with culture and creativity

Our community told us they want to be able to experience culture and creativity as they walk through our streets, parks and laneways. This will help to further define a distinct sense of identity for our local places and help define North Sydney as a cultural and creative hub.

There are many innovative examples of creative use and activation of public spaces from around the world that we can draw on, including public art trails such as the one in North Sydney, using laneways for dance rehearsal spaces, interactive art installations, community art projects and pop-up galleries.

North Sydney has many unique local places with potential for activation with cultural activities or creative expression. We have the geographical advantage of being situated on Sydney Harbour boasting stunning natural landscapes and iconic views, with waterfront public spaces providing opportunities for creative expression and cultural connection.

Inspiration we can draw on: Laneway activation, Sydney



To help revitalise Sydney CBD after the COVID-19 pandemic, City of Sydney transformed and activated several laneways in the area to make them more appealing and functional. Key strategies included improving lighting, developing outdoor dining areas, installing public art, adding greenery and improving walking connections.

Inspiration we can draw on: Creative lighting, Parramatta

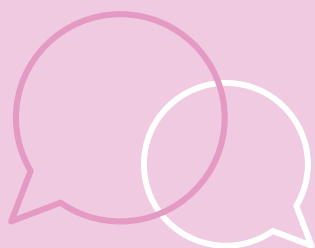


City of Parramatta installs temporary lighting along the Parramatta River during festivals such as Diwali to celebrate cultural diversity and encourage more people to visit and use the foreshore during these significant cultural events.



We need to have spaces that cater to diverse and new types of art and culture. This will allow other people to be recognised for their art, bring connection to the community and enable the community to shift from consumer to contributor.

North Sydney community member



Let's have a discussion...

- Are there public spaces, such as laneways, plazas or parks, that you think would benefit from arts and creative uses? What kinds of things would you like to see in these spaces?
- Are there any Council facilities that could be repurposed for cultural uses, reducing the need for additional space and funding to deliver new facilities?
- Are there any non-Council buildings, such as schools, that could include shared spaces for cultural and creative events, programs and activities?
- What types of cultural and creative uses and spaces would you like to see in our densest and most developed population centres? For example, around our train stations.
- What types of cultural and creative spaces are missing in North Sydney? For example, exhibition spaces?

Provide your feedback by taking our online survey:

yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/our-next-ten-years



3

Supporting and partnering with the creative sector

What is this theme about?

North Sydney is a hub of creativity, with many visual artists, writers, performers, dancers, cultural groups, creative businesses and organisations contributing to our cultural and creative landscape.

Council has long been committed to supporting creatives through key initiatives such as the North Sydney Art Prize, artist studios, capacity-building programs and grants. Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre is a Council-owned facility that provides a home base for NSW and Sydney-wide arts and craft organisations.

With the rising costs of living, the creative sector is experiencing many challenges that make it harder to create and showcase work and connect with the broader community.

Into the future, there is a need to continue to support artists, makers and creative businesses to keep on creating in North Sydney. There is opportunity for more partnerships and collaboration, capacity building, professional development and advocacy to support the creative sector.



Issues and opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were identified through background research and interviews with industry stakeholders and Council staff.

Supporting artists, creatives and businesses post-COVID

Creatives and creative businesses in Australia, including in North Sydney, have been hit hard by the cumulative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising cost of living, which is impacting livelihoods and the long-term sustainability of the creative sector.

Council can play a number of direct roles in supporting local creatives and businesses including by continuing to deliver capacity-building programs, professional development programs, and other support such as artist studios. Council can also help promote local offerings to increase the reach of creatives and businesses.

Council can indirectly support the sustainability of the creative sector by advocating for funding, connecting to opportunities through the State Government and other agencies, and fostering partnerships with philanthropic organisations and the private sector.

In particular, Council recognises the value of supporting young, emerging and diverse artists, writers and performers in our community, for example through mentorship programs.

Increasing collaboration between Council and the creative sector

Increasing communication and collaboration between Council and local creatives and creative businesses can support leadership, sharing of information about local needs and opportunities, and collaborative delivery of cultural and creative initiatives. Council can also facilitate increased networking among local creatives and organisations.

In particular, there is an opportunity for Council to collaborate with educational institutions including universities, TAFE and schools for community art projects.

Reducing red tape to enable our community and creatives

We recognise that government processes and regulations can be tricky to navigate, and that red tape can be a barrier to the delivery of arts and cultural initiatives.

Streamlining our processes and supporting creatives to participate can make opportunities more accessible and enable our community and creative organisations. As part of this Strategy, we want to understand which Council processes you think could be simplified.



Those who work in the sector are passionate about what they do. Their entrepreneurial spirit and urge to create means they see opportunities where others see problems.

Creative Communities: Putting culture at the heart of the state, NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy, 2024-2033



Inspiration we can draw on: Project week, Bradfield College



Image source: Vivid Sydney

During project week at Bradfield College, students have a week without formal classes. Instead they have five days dedicated to creating, rehearsing and learning. In 2018, during project week, Bradfield students prepared a multi-model exhibition for Vivid Sydney.

The exhibition was titled “The new creatives: Hidden in plain view” and explored Sydney’s hidden stories about people, land and spirit. The exhibition included stories from Australia’s Indigenous past to contemporary urban life, using a range of mediums such as film, dance, music, food, painting and design.

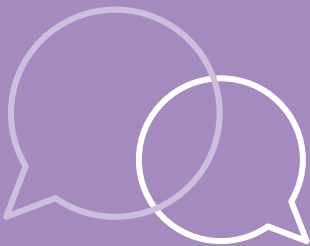
This is an example of nurturing young creatives to contribute to our shared sense of belonging and place.

Inspiration we can draw on: Gadigal wayfinding project, Inner West Council



Image source: Inner West Council
(Artist: Jasmine Sarin)

Inner West Council’s award-winning Gadigal Wangal Wayfinding Project not only celebrates Aboriginal history and culture through visually captivating art installations but also highlights the importance of mentoring and supporting young First Nations artists. The project commissioned five artists to create site-specific artworks depicting elements of Gadigal and Wangal culture. During the project Chris Edwards from Edwards Clarke’s creative team mentored three young First Nations artists. Through guidance and support, these mentees developed design proposals for the final public art commission, with one of them being chosen for the commission at Camperdown Memorial Rest Park in Newtown. The mentorship experience not only enhanced the artists’ skills and confidence but also provided them with connections to get involved with future projects.



Let's have a discussion...

- How can we encourage more collaboration between Council and the creative sector?
- What kind of support and programs would you like to see Council deliver for creatives and creative businesses?
- How can we improve our existing support programs, such as artist studios, to better support creatives?
- How can we support artists in studios to better connect with the community?
- How can Council better connect local creatives to grant opportunities?

Provide your feedback by taking our online survey:
yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/our-next-ten-years



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Sharing our diverse stories

What is this theme about?

This theme is about celebrating North Sydney's diverse stories through promoting, preserving, interpreting and sharing our history and heritage, including First Nations, colonial and multicultural stories.

Our community highly values our history and heritage. Council plays a key role in helping to preserve our many significant First Nations and non-Indigenous heritage sites, as well as our historical archives and collections. Council is also one of only three local government agencies in NSW to employ a professional historian. The North Sydney Heritage Centre is a unique facility that promotes, preserves, interprets and shares our history and heritage through exhibitions, collections, research, and public programs such as talks and guided walks among other activities.

Into the future, we want to explore opportunities to connect more people to our local diverse stories, including our multicultural and migrant stories.



Issues and opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were identified through background research and interviews with industry stakeholders and Council staff.

Sharing and raising awareness of North Sydney's First Nations cultural heritage

First Nations people have called North Sydney home for tens of thousands of years. We recognise that First Nations culture is a living culture with ongoing connections to Country. Council works with the Aboriginal Heritage Office, which is funded by northern Sydney councils to assist with the protection and promotion of Aboriginal history and heritage. There are several significant sites in North Sydney including engravings at Balls Head and Berry Island.

As part of this Strategy, Council is engaging with First Nations community members to understand how we can raise awareness of First Nations living culture and heritage, and centre First Nations voices in doing so. This could include more collaborative partnerships with First Nations artists and cultural organisations, public art installations, signage, cultural events and festivals and educational programs and tours. We recognise the importance of initiatives being First Nations led and culturally safe.

Celebrating and sharing our heritage and history

Education plays an important role in celebrating our heritage and history. Council already delivers a range of educational programs, with opportunity to encourage more community-led heritage initiatives, community art projects, and public art installations focused on the area's history.

We also have many schools located in North Sydney that can be leveraged to teach children and young people about our history. This could include running art prizes focused on history and heritage, workshops and lectures, or collaborative school art projects.

We are lucky to have many heritage and historic buildings and sites in North Sydney. There may be opportunities to activate these spaces to help connect our community to stories and experiences in place, for example through public art or events.

Telling our shared stories in public spaces

North Sydney's heritage and history should be reflected in our public spaces, including streets, parks, plazas and laneways. This could include cultural tours (including self-guided tours), and public art trails with signage that reflect the history of the area.

Preserving our shared stories

We need to ensure our heritage, including physical buildings and archives and stories of the past, is preserved for years to come. This includes ensuring our archives are appropriately stored, and collections are digitised for the future. As part of this Strategy, we are interested in innovative ways to store and share stories of our past, for example via an interactive website.

Sharing our diverse stories, present and future

The current North Sydney community has diverse stories to share, and we want to explore ways to collect and share these with future generations.

Through this it is important to spotlight the contributions of our growing migrant communities. These narratives enrich our cultural tapestry and reflect our growing multicultural community. Through inclusive initiatives like multicultural festivals and collaborative projects, we celebrate these diverse voices, ensuring they are integral to our shared narrative of creativity and resilience.

Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace

HAYDEN

Inspiration we can draw on: Bondi Story Room, Waverley Council



Image source: Bondi Pavilion

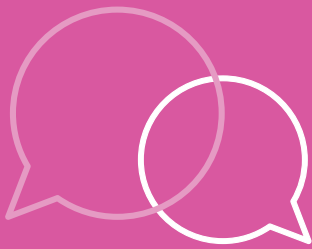
The Bondi Story Room is an interactive digital exhibition that celebrates stories from Waverley's diverse history. Developed in collaboration with the local community, the Gujaga Foundation, and various local organisations, the experience invites visitors to explore notable people, places and events that have shaped Waverley. The Story Room prioritises inclusivity and accessibility with a wheelchair-friendly design, translations in multiple languages (Spanish, Mandarin, French), compatibility with screen readers, tactile elements, and dedicated quiet sessions. These features ensure everyone can engage with and enjoy these stories.

Inspiration we can draw on: Cultural precincts, Inner West Council



Image source: Inner West Council (Artist: OX King)

Inner West Council's commitment to recognising migrant communities led to the creation of special precincts including Little Italy, Little Portugal, Little Greece and Little Vietnam. These cultural precincts help to celebrate the diverse cultural fabric of the area and share multicultural stories and experiences. The planning process involved extensive engagement with community members, local businesses and cultural ambassadors. Across many LGAs, including North Sydney, there is a strong desire for more cultural heritage interpretation, particularly interpretation that reflects First Nations experiences and waves of migration to the area. This case study is a great example of precinct-based planning that is informed by extensive and place-based community engagement.



Let's have a discussion...

- How can we raise awareness and connect our community to our heritage stories? Think about First Nations, European and migrant stories.
- What types of heritage programs and activities would you like to see in North Sydney?
- How can we use our existing heritage sites in exciting and innovative ways to engage new audiences and share our history?
- Do you have any ideas for how we can collect and share our recent and ongoing stories?

Provide your feedback by taking our online survey:
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North Sydney as a cultural and creative destination

Issues and opportunities

North Sydney is already a destination for arts and cultural experiences for visitors from across Sydney and internationally, with popular destinations including Luna Park, Wendy Whiteley's Secret Garden, Kirribilli Markets and the Ensemble Theatre. However, North Sydney does not necessarily have a strong brand or reputation as an arts and cultural destination.

North Sydney's location close to the Sydney CBD is a strength. It enables our residents to easily travel by bus, train or ferry, and in the future the Metro, to participate in cultural and creative opportunities at NSW's leading museums, theatres, concert halls and galleries. However, this also means we have high-profile competition for our arts and cultural offerings.

Into the future, there is opportunity to further evolve and better promote North Sydney's destinational arts and cultural experiences to draw audiences. This has the potential for significant economic value add, jobs creation and enhanced place vitality.

At the same time, we need to consider the need for sustainable visitation, balancing the needs of our local residents and visitors.

Let's have a discussion...

- Do we want to position North Sydney as a cultural and creative destination?
- What are our existing strengths that we can build on to create destinational experiences in North Sydney?
- How can we better promote North Sydney as a destination for culture and creativity to attract visitors from across Sydney, NSW, Australia and Internationally?
- If North Sydney were to attract major events, festivals and experiences to our area, would you be willing to pay to access these?

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Investing in culture and creativity

Issues and opportunities

As we explore the importance of investing in culture and creativity in North Sydney, it's essential to acknowledge the costs associated with providing projects and services that enrich our community. With our limited resources, we acknowledge that there is only so much that Council can do. We take our role as an advocate to Federal and State Government funding bodies seriously, and are also keen to explore other innovative investment and funding options to ensure the sustainability and growth of our creative and cultural initiatives.

We invite you to consider other possible avenues such as:

- **Public-private partnerships:** Private businesses can contribute financially to cultural and creative projects through corporate sponsorship and engagement in public-private partnerships.
- **Private philanthropists and foundations:** Philanthropists can contribute financial support through charitable donations, sponsorships and grants, endowments and legacy giving.
- **Crowdfunding campaigns:** Digital platforms now allow communities to directly support cultural projects they're passionate about. These campaigns can raise funds for specific initiatives, events, or ongoing support for artists and cultural organisations.
- **Revenue generating initiatives:** Developing revenue-generating activities such as paid events can help to offset the cost of providing projects.

Let's have a discussion...

- What innovative funding models could be explored to support culture and creativity in North Sydney? For example, are there opportunities for public-private partnerships, crowdfunding campaigns, or corporate sponsorships?
- How can we engage the community in the funding process and ensure that their voices are heard?

Provide your feedback by taking our online survey:
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References

1. Creative Australia, Widening The Lens: Social inequality and arts participation, 2023
2. Creative Australia, National Arts Participation Survey (NAPS), 2022
3. NAPS 2022
4. Davies, C, M Knuiiman and M Rosenberg (2016) 'The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population,' BMC Public Health
5. Creative Australia, Creating Wellbeing: Attitudes and engagement with arts, culture and health, 2023
6. NAPS 2022
7. Creative Australia, Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning Program in schools, 2020

Get involved

We have a number of opportunities for the community to provide feedback, including:

Do the online survey

Complete our 15-minute online survey to provide your feedback and ideas about culture and creativity in North Sydney.

Attend a community forum

Join us for the Culture and Creativity Community Forum on Tuesday 18 June (6pm-7.30pm) at Hutley Hall where an expert panel will discuss the future of culture and creativity in North Sydney.

Drop in for a chat

You will find Council staff at local markets and CBD pop-up stalls in the coming weeks, listening to your feedback and answering questions.

For more information

Scan the QR Code or visit yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/our-next-ten-years



