



# Arts Plan

2022-2027



MOUNT BARKER  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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First Nations people  
heritage and culture  
is important to the Mount  
Barker District Council.  
We acknowledge that the  
district is part of the  
traditional ancestral land  
of the Peramangk people.  
We acknowledge the deep  
feelings of attachment  
and relationship of the  
Peramangk people to this  
land and their ongoing  
custodianship.



# Executive Summary

Mount Barker District Council has transformed significantly in the last decade. It is currently South Australia's fastest growing regional Council with an expected population growth of up to 40% by 2036. This growth has provided benefits and challenges for Council. Maintaining service levels across the many areas of Local Government activity and grappling with the changing character of the region – from sleepy hills communities to a rapidly developing region featuring a large urban centre and many evolving rural villages. Within this context, it is an ideal time for Council to take stock of its cultural aspirations and think about the role of arts in building a strong, connected and prosperous community.

To date Council has supported the arts in a variety of ways – mostly through the provision of financial and in-kind support to others to deliver important arts activities across the region. This includes community grants offered to a variety of community groups and funding (cash/in-kind) for the Hahndorf Academy and Inkpot Arts. As the needs of the community change and people become familiar with the role of the arts in building well-rounded communities Council is thinking more strategically about arts and cultural activities.

After engaging with the community broadly, this plan has been formulated to progress Council's existing strengths in the arts space. It will help Council and the community build on assets and ensure the region can fully realise its potential as a vibrant community with a diverse and sustainable economy.

Three key priorities have been identified in the Arts Plan, these include:

- Community arts and cultural development (CACD)
- Arts and Cultural Tourism
- Creative industries.



# The Planning Context

Art is the tangible and intangible products or expressions of creativity. It is a way of articulating imagined ideas, both real and unreal using a variety of media to create something that can be experienced temporarily or in an ongoing or permanent way.

Art is something that we can enjoy in a multitude of ways – creating original works ourselves (e.g., painting, composing, writing), recreating the works of others (e.g., performing, following a pattern) or enjoying the works of others as part of the audience (e.g., reading, watching film, going to an exhibition).

As the list below demonstrates, the word “art” encompasses a broad range of activities and our reasons for engaging can also be diverse. Art can be valued simply because of what it offers on face value, where its inherent characteristics offer enjoyment, satisfaction or pleasure. It can also be valued on an instrumental level, where it brings value in other ways, improving our sense of wellbeing or ability to form relationships, increasing our capacity to communicate, preserve, learn or promote ideas and knowledge or providing benefit on an economic level. No matter the reason, art is an important part of a well-rounded community and engagement with art and culture is decreed a basic human right by the United Nations. It offers endless possibilities, and the same artwork can offer a completely different experience from one person to the next.

Art includes but is not limited to:

Television production	Textiles
Architecture/Landscaping	Fashion
Jewellery Making	Projection Art
Dance	Digital media
Photography	Sculpture
Ceramics	Composing
Theatre	Comedy
Circus	Puppetry
Storytelling	Design
Film	Drawing
Painting	Music
Poetry	Writing
Books	Murals
Video	Games
Street Art	Printmaking
Crafts	

## VALUE OF ARTS

Communities the world over invest in the arts to develop and strengthen communities from cultural, social, environmental and economic perspectives and there is strong evidence suggesting these activities have a significantly positive impact. Arts activities help communities to showcase their unique qualities, improve lifestyle, increase a sense of wellbeing and add to the vitality and sustainability of places. The following research demonstrates the value of art and why it is a worthwhile investment.



The Australian creative industries sector contributes more than \$90billion to the national economy and exports \$3.2billion annually. It adds \$46billion to Australia's GDP. (Valuing Australia's Creative Industries 0213. <https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/australias-creative-industries-valuation>).



From a health perspective people who participate in 2 or more hours of arts-based activities per week experience significantly better mental wellbeing. (From Research undertaken by Dr Christina Davies 2016 <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-015-2672-7>)



Pre-pandemic, an estimated 65000 full and part-time jobs were created by monies spent on live music nationally with taxation revenue generated for all tiers of government (2014) (<https://livemusicoffice.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/LiveMusic-report-FINAL.pdf>). According to research and analysis undertaken by PWC by 2025 the live music sector will have bounced back from the catastrophic impact of the pandemic and have a national value of \$800million (<https://www.pwc.com.au/industry/entertainment-and-media-trends-analysis/outlook/music.html>)



A study of 12 regional performing arts venues, public art galleries and museums indicate that collectively these facilities created an additional 8.5 jobs outside the cultural sector for every 10 full time positions within the cultural sector and added over \$14 million to the local economy in 07/08 FY. (Museum & Galleries NSW report Value Added <https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/research/adding-value/>)



A UK study demonstrates that the social return on investment for arts engagement is 1:118. This means that for every £1 invested, a social value of £118 is generated – mainly in forgone treatment bills, reducing GP visits by 28% and attendance at emergency wards by 24%. (Ways to Wellbeing. Social Prescribing Program. Wellbeing Enterprises UK (2017) <http://www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/206921-low-res.pdf>)

# Plan Overview

## WHY DO WE NEED AN ARTS PLAN?

The Mount Barker District Council Arts Plan provides a framework for Council and the community to develop and support arts and creative activities and nurture artistic talent over the next five years. It presents a vision for the region in relation to the visibility, purpose and value of art and sets out themes, goals and strategies to realise this vision. The purpose of this document is to:

- Create an aspirational vision for the arts for Council and the community that aligns with the needs and culture of the Mount Barker District community.
- Provide Council with a roadmap in relation to investment in the arts, creative engagement and facilities.
- Encourage buy-in and ownership from the community that fosters development and growth of the district.
- Position Council to advocate for the arts, attract investment and build partnerships across a range of complementary sectors including education, health, tourism and regional development.
- Increase participation in arts activities that enhances local lifestyle and wellbeing.



#### VISION

**“Mount Barker District has a strong and sustainable arts sector that contributes to the economic, cultural, environmental and social fabric of the region.**

**It is a place where art is visible, creative activities are accessible and artists thrive”.**



Our Arts + Cultural Tourism Goal:

**Mount Barker District offers captivating arts experiences that celebrate the character of the region and contribute to the visitor economy.**

## THEMES + GOALS

### 1. Arts + Cultural Tourism

Arts and cultural tourism focuses on the development of arts activities and assets which attract visitors in their own right or enhance the nature of visitor experiences. Whilst the focus of investment in this space is visitation and tourism, it should also provide benefit for residents in several ways – financially and culturally. High quality arts and cultural tourism relies on local buy-in and a capacity to interpret and promote local character and identity in authentic and captivating ways.

**What are we talking about:** Festivals + Events, Live Music / Theatre, Premiere Arts + Cultural Venues, Interpretation, Tours + Trails, First Nations Culture, Public Art etc.



## THEMES + GOALS

### 2. Community Arts + Cultural Development

Community arts and cultural development (CACD) focuses on accessible creative activities that fosters participation regardless of age, ethnicity or skill level. It provides an instrumental value where people are not only creating art but also learning, having fun, improving health and wellbeing, connecting with others or helping to address a pertinent issue such as climate change. CACD positions the community at the centre of the activity, is designed to be accessible and it relies on professional artists to lead and facilitate.

As a socially inclusive practice CACD includes engagement with diverse communities and groups who may otherwise not have opportunities to engage with art and creative activities. It is considerate of difference and creating environments that foster participation.

What we are talking about: Arts and crafts workshops, music education, community choirs / bands, hobby and special interest groups, arts and health initiatives e.g., healthy ageing, storytelling projects, community theatre etc.

Our Arts + Cultural Development Goal:

**Mount Barker District residents have access to arts activities that celebrate local identity, enhance the landscape and help residents connect with people and places.**



**Our Creative Industries Goal:**

**Mount Barker District is a place where artists can grow their practice, experiment and build sustainable creative businesses and where arts actively contribute to the local economy.**

## THEMES + GOALS

### 3. Creative Industries

Creative industries focuses on the professionalisation of arts practice where individuals and organisations enjoy commercial benefit from their artmaking. It incorporates all artforms and involves supporting artists and organisations to utilise their creative skills to establish a business.

What we are talking about: Creative co-working spaces and incubators, masterclasses, seed funding and incentive schemes, live music industry, arts business support and development programs, First Nations artist development, urban renewal projects, networking and collaboration events.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles provide a foundation for how Mount Barker District Council will implement the Arts Plan. They are designed to support decision making and help to guide the way Council operates.

### 1. Capacity Building

Council is focused on building the capacity of others to lead, self-organise and develop sustainable events, organisations and businesses. It is committed to ongoing engagement with community to achieve its goals.

### 2. Storytelling

Council will position stories at the centre of arts projects – celebrating and acknowledging local character and built, natural and ephemeral heritage within its arts initiatives. It will ensure that creative outcomes are authentic and relevant to the community.

### 3. Access and Diversity

Council will ensure arts activities are inclusive of and engage with diverse communities and integrated into everyday places and activities throughout the District.

### 4. Partnerships

Council values and appreciates the expertise of others and will form partnerships with organisations and actively seek funding to support the realisation of the actions detailed in this plan.

### 5. Experiment + Evaluate

Council will foster innovation, be bold and pilot new things. It will support a culture of experimentation and provide opportunities for projects to grow over time with a foundation of evaluation and impact assessment.

### 6. Value Artists

Council values the role of creatives in the community and commits to engaging with professional artists as part of the work it undertakes. Engagement with artists will be undertaken according to best practice industry standards.

# Strategies + Actions

## 1. ARTS AND CULTURAL TOURISM

### Goal:

Mount Barker District offers captivating arts experiences that celebrate the character of the region and contribute to the visitor economy

Short = 1 to 2 years  
Medium = 2 to 4 years  
Long = 5+ years

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
A <b>Support and develop places and spaces that offer high-quality arts experiences for visitors.</b>	A1 Continue to work with the Arts organisations, support their growth and develop further opportunities to develop programs that are unique to the region, engage local artists and celebrate local character and identity.	Ongoing
	A2 Work with the Crystal Lake Working Group and support the development of a feasibility study and business plan which realises their vision to create a unique regional arts destination.	Short
	A3 Continue to work with Hahndorf Academy on growing programs and scoping needs and priorities in relation to a redevelopment – ensuring it provides a unique offering in comparison with The Cedars new gallery.	Ongoing
	A4 Scope the development of the barn site on Bald Hills Road for repurposing as an multi arts venue. Other opportunities and venues may emerge as part of this process and the role of an arts venue within a recreation precinct will be considered.	Long
	A5 Undertake an audit of existing public art and public art policy and processes. Ensuring that public art will be documented from an asset perspective and utilised productively an appropriate policy, management process and strategy will be put in place to best care for, promote and develop public art moving forward.	Short
B <b>Further expand the community events calendar to include captivating arts programs and events – in line with other key visitor opportunities including wellness, culinary and eco-tourism.</b>	B6 Work with local community event organisers to include unique creative content within festivals and events that increases the likelihood of visitor participation e.g., Farmers Market, Show, special interest days in smaller communities utilising a variety of artforms.	Short
	B7 Scope the development of new arts-based events/festivals – considering local strengths around nature and heritage and gaps in existing events market. Undertaken in collaboration with the business network, AHT, arts organisations and any new partners.	Short
	B8 Work with artists, businesses and community organisations to develop an annual SALA arts trail. Incorporating this with neighbouring Councils to create an Adelaide Hills SALA trail.	Long
	B9 Continue to foster relationships with major Adelaide Festivals including Adelaide Festival, Fringe and Adelaide Film Festival – ensuring that the offering is high quality but relates to Mount Barker in a unique way.	Ongoing
C <b>Enhance existing and develop new visitor experiences that celebrate the character of the region.</b>	C10 Develop First Nations trail focusing on Peramangk culture in collaboration with First Nations elders and artists. It will encourage exploration of the region and should incorporate sculpture and storytelling – utilising both physical and digital platforms.	Long
	C11 Develop a mural and sculpture program in collaboration with the local business network to enhance the urban landscape and ensure it is more memorable. (Relates to Action 2.2.5)	Medium
	C12 Offer incentives / funding to encourage tourism operators to collaborate with artists, working across a range of artforms..	Medium
	C13 Collaborate with neighbouring Councils on the development of shared arts-based assets, trails or collateral that promotes cross-council activities.	Medium

## 2. COMMUNITY

### ARTS + CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (CACD)

#### Goal:

Mount Barker District residents have access to arts activities that celebrate local identity, enhance the landscape and help residents connect with people and places.

Short = 1 to 2 years  
Medium = 2 to 4 years  
Long = 5+ years

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
D <b>Integrate the arts across all Council activities and services.</b>	D14 Consider the role of arts and seek to include within all existing and new Council strategies and plans.	Medium
	D15 Increase the capacity of staff to utilise the arts in a range of contexts including economic development, marketing and branding, health and environmental promotion, and infrastructure development.	Short
	D16 Develop a percentage for art policy across all Council infrastructure projects valued at \$500k and above where appropriate. This includes redevelopment and new projects.	Long
	D17 Improve the capacity of planning and development team to work with developers in relation to inclusion of arts-friendly community spaces. This may include public art, installation of infrastructure and affordable studio / exhibition spaces.	Medium
E <b>Increase opportunities for community members to engage with arts activities as part of everyday life.</b>	E18 Develop an annual themes-based residency program that is embedded within community.	Medium
	E19 Works with a range of arts organisations to develop and outreach program that delivers art programs in small communities.	Short
	E20 Continue to support and build the capacity of community arts organisations to develop and deliver arts activities that includes both learning and public / community outcomes.	Ongoing
	E21 Develop collaborative marketing strategies with arts program providers throughout the Council area to increase awareness of what is available.	Medium
	E22 Involve community within the development of public art and ensure that other stakeholders involved in public art development do the same. (Relates to Action C11)	Medium
	E23 Work closely with Ukaria to better leverage the presence of highly skilled musicians to engage in community projects / workshops.	Medium
F <b>Improve the capacity of individuals and organisations to lead and deliver arts projects that provide artistic and other outcomes relating to health, the environment or education.</b>	F24 Improve knowledge about CACD through training and promotion and mentor organisations to deliver projects across a range of artforms.	Short
	F25 Develop and provide ongoing support for an independent arts network that encourages artists to share knowledge and skills and collaborate.	Short
	F26 Increase the capacity of artists and arts organisations to access and source funding for arts projects.	Medium
G <b>Ensure there are suitable places and spaces where community can engage with arts activities.</b>	G27 Conduct an audit of available venues (commercial, community + Council owned) and identify and invest in resources to increase suitability for a range of arts activities. Create a database and promote broadly.	Short
	G28 Help artists and organisations to broker relationships with commercial / private landlords to utilise facilities both in the short and long term.	Long
	G29 Identify long term need and options in relation to a permanent multi-arts hub suitable for the creation and presentation of a range of art forms.	Long

### 3. CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

#### Goal:

Mount Barker District is a place where artists can grow their practice, experiment and build sustainable creative businesses and where arts actively contribute to the local economy.

Short = 1 to 2 years  
Medium = 2 to 4 years  
Long = 5+ years

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
H <b>Improve the career pathways for artists through business development, education and employment opportunities.</b>	H30 Work with Regional Development Australia to scope and develop a creative industries incubator and co-working space.	Short
	H31 Establish an arts entrepreneur program – delivered annually to support emerging artists to develop their practice into a commercial business.	Medium
	H32 Develop a business mentor and professional development program for artists wanting to establish an arts-based business.	Medium
	H33 Develop networking opportunities for artists to encourage collaboration (Related to Action F25).	Short
	H34 Provide seed funding for businesses to work with artists to develop projects and build their profile.	Long
	H35 Develop policy that includes local artist engagement within Council or Council-funded projects –as lead artist, in a support role or as part of a mentoring program.	Long
	H36 Increase the visibility of artists and creative industries by promoting through Council communications channels.	Short
1 <b>Improve the region's night-time economy through arts development.</b>	I37 Work with the Music Development Office to re-develop and implement a Live Music Strategy for Mount Barker District.	Long
	I38 Work with live music venues and encourage the engagement of local musicians.	Medium
	I39 When developing festivals and events ensure night-time activities are included in the program development (Related to Action B7).	Long
	I40 Utilise the development of and improve murals and sculptures to support the night-time economy. This may include the development of lighting and resources that supports engagement with work after hours, in collaboration with local businesses.	Long
	I41 Support the development of a local presenter group in collaboration with Country Arts to increase the number of live theatre performances in the region.	Long
	I42 Consider night-time engagement when developing public art – possibly adding lighting or utilising projection art (Related to Action C11) .	Long

# Resourcing Strategy

The resourcing of the Mount Barker District Council Arts Plan requires diverse and innovative approaches by Council. Council needs to better understand the value of arts to achieve beneficial outcomes across social, cultural and environmental spheres and make a commitment to the arts as an integral part of community life and the local economy. The following provides a series of possible resourcing strategies that council may consider. These can support the implementation of the strategies and actions in this plan and should be implemented in consultation with community. It is important to note that the actions will be staged over several years and resourcing can grow and change as required.

## 1. APPOINTMENT OF AN ARTS COORDINATOR

The Arts Coordinator will have oversight over the plan and coordinate its implementation and evaluation over the long term. In the first instance they will focus on bringing the arts sector together around the three strategic themes, forming strong networks and relationships and celebrating strengths. In time, the focus would shift, with the Coordinator investing more deeply into developing the Creative Industries and Cultural Tourism themes with partnerships established with others such as Innpot Arts, Adelaide Hills Tourism and the Mount Barker Community Centre to further

develop CACD in partnership with Council.

The Coordinator will have strong administrative, communication and development skills and have considerable arts and cultural expertise. Their leadership capacity, ability to bring in funds and community development skills will also be critical.

## 2. PARTNERSHIPS

As indicated above partnerships with other agencies will be integral to achieving the goals outlined in this plan. Working with others acknowledges the expertise that exists within the Mount Barker region and can provide strategic advantage in terms of marketing, venue development and access to funding. Existing partnerships should continue with a view to further developing others – particularly around the development of places and spaces where public private partnerships will be advantageous.

## 3. DEVELOPMENT OF FOUNDATION

General community or specifically arts focused foundations that foster a culture of philanthropy on a local level are becoming more popular and, in some ways, necessary. Mount Gambier Council has recently established the Riddoch Arts Foundation and the Sunshine Coast Arts Foundation was established three years ago. These foundations can be established at

arm's reach of Council, offer tax incentives for giving and provide a pathway for philanthropic investment that is visible on a local level and will have direct impact on the Mount Barker District community.

## 4. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

With development in the Mount Barker district set to continue at a rapid pace, implementing a strategic approach to working with Developers on contributions will provide benefit – for the arts and in other areas. Mount Barker District Council has the benefit of experience in this space, working with Developers over the last two decades. Identifying what Council want and need from Developers and prioritising investment in the arts alongside other standard infrastructure will support the realisation of the Arts Plan vision. Equipping staff to better negotiate, communicate the mutual benefit that arts investment brings and encourage Developers to think outside the box is an important part of this resourcing strategy. This is particularly relevant in relation to public art and entry statements, which should be created according to best practice principles but can also look at plug and play infrastructure within public spaces and developing affordable community spaces within developments suitable for arts interaction.

## 5. RESEARCH THE POTENTIAL FOR AN ARTS LEVY

Whilst Councils are loathe to add additional financial burden on its rate payers the introduction of an arts levy has proven valuable for arts development in other parts of the world. Other levy models focused on tourism and main street / business development have also long been a part of the local government financial landscape. Levies enable 100% transparency and residents can see first-hand the value of the investment either for themselves, their business / organisation or their family members.

With approximately 19,000 rated properties in the Mount Barker District Council a levy of just \$10 per rate payer per year would raise \$190,000 for investment in the arts. Even half of that would represent a significant dedicated annual injection. It is recommended that these funds bolster arts funding to key groups, develop festivals and events, establish an annual public art and residency program based around key strategic themes and have strategic funds to scope further development opportunities and prepare feasibility. Money raised through the levy should be further leveraged to attract external funding – resulting in even further investment in the arts. This sends a very clear message to other stakeholders about Mount Barker District as a place for the arts and Council as a legitimate supporter of arts, providing opportunities to form stronger and more lucrative partnerships.

Sunshine Coast Council has just introduced an Arts Levy – it has been added onto its existing heritage levy with an addition of \$3 per rate payer. Due to the size of the Council this translates into over \$400,000 in revenue to be directly expended on the arts with an expected return of more than \$1.5million dollars of value for the local arts community and broader economy. The City of Portland in the USA also has an Arts and Education Tax of \$35 per resident over the age of 18 and at a particular income level. Since 2012 \$99million has been collected for arts organisations and schools engaging in arts activities.

## 6. ACT REGIONALLY

Regional partnerships help to spread costs for regional initiatives across neighbouring councils and often provide better bang for your buck. This is particularly relevant for the development of residency programs that can provide broader regional benefits, the development and promotion of trails, networking and professional development and the presentation of festivals / events and touring content that can leapfrog across Council borders. There are regional bodies that can support this type of cross-collaboration including RDA and AHT, but it is also worth arts and cultural focused staff developing networks with their colleagues at neighbouring Councils.



# How We Will Measure Progress

Monitoring progress and measuring the progress of Mount Barker District Council's Arts Plan is an important part of the plan. To ensure we are adequately checking on progress our evaluation approach will:

- Put our goals and strategies at the forefront of our planning conversations when developing initiatives. In other words, we will plan with the end in mind and make sure funding and effort is being invested strategically and proactively rather than reactively.
- Be planned from the outset – establishing what and how we are going to measure the impact of our work against our strategies and goals. In other words, we won't get to the end of the project and then decide what and how we will measure our success.
- Engage participants, audiences, recipients and stakeholders in evaluation of our work in an ongoing way – our activities will incorporate feedback loops and data collection that indicates if we are seeing the growth and development that we anticipated.
- Utilise quantitative evaluation tools to measure their success whenever appropriate.
- Wherever possible Council will endeavour to assess the impact of arts on the broader pillars of the community. For example it may measure the value of arts and creativity to the local economy, social connectedness, the environment, health and education.
- Council will look to use existing impact assessment and evaluation frameworks where possible and if funding is available it will seek to work with experts in this space. For example Culture Counts or the Cultural Impact Framework (created in SA) may be utilised by Council staff.

## Goal:

Mount Barker District offers captivating arts experiences that celebrate the character of the region and contribute to the visitor economy.

- The capacity of our tourism offerings to attract visitors and the level of their spending.
- Level of satisfaction of our visitors to the region and the likelihood of repeat visitation.
- The number and quality of new arts and cultural tourism experiences developed.
- The income generated for artists in the development and delivery of arts and cultural tourism offerings.
- The level of external funding / in-kind support gathered for arts and cultural tourism initiatives.

## Goal:

Mount Barker District residents have access to arts activities that celebrate local identity, enhance the landscape and help residents connect with people and places.

- Local participation levels in arts programs.
- The number of opportunities to experience and enjoy arts as an audience member.
- Satisfaction levels of participants / audience members.
- The number of community arts projects – both initiated by Council and initiated by others but supported by Council.

## Goal:

Mount Barker District residents have access to arts activities that celebrate local identity, enhance the landscape and help residents connect with people and places

- The number of artists supported and the number of hours of support provided – relating to creative industries.
- The number of artists engaged in a regional arts network and satisfaction levels.
- The number of new creative industries directly supported by Council and their contribution to the local economy.
- Number of business / artist collaborations

# Our Methodology

## RESEARCH

Our research involved reading a range of documents and gathering information from key staff and stakeholders in the region. A range of internal and external documents (15+) have been reviewed with key areas that may be relevant to arts planning in Mount Barker noted. This information informed our thinking when developing the arts plan, ensuring strategic alignment on a local, regional and broader level.

## ENGAGEMENT

Engagement was undertaken through a variety of activities designed to captivate people and encourage feedback, ideas and information about what has happened in the past – both good and bad. We targeted specific groups and individuals and provided opportunities for members of the public or interested groups to attend group sessions and interact online. The table below provides an overview of the consultation and engagement activities that have been undertaken over 6 – 8 weeks.

ACTIVITY	DETAILS	
<b>1:1 and Group meetings and interviews.</b>	<p>A range of interviews / meetings with a variety of stakeholders and Council staff. These covered a range of areas including tourism, education, arts, economic development, business, infrastructure, place-making and the environment.</p> <p>Organisations engaged in these sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hahndorf Academy</li> <li>• Macclesfield Residents Association</li> <li>• Crystal Lakes Group</li> <li>• Inkpot Arts</li> <li>• Mount Barker Library</li> <li>• Mount Barker Community Centre</li> <li>• Mount Barker Business Group</li> <li>• Mount Barker District Council</li> <li>• The Cedars</li> <li>• Adelaide Hills Tourism</li> <li>• Ukaria</li> </ul>	<p>13 Meetings 11 Groups 30 People</p>
<b>Creative Engagement</b>	<p><b>High School Workshop</b> In collaboration with Cornerstone College, we presented a Creative Arts and Placemaking Workshop with Year 11 Students. We invited students to talk about Mount Barker District as a Creative Place.</p>	12 Students + 2 Teachers
	<p><b>Postcard Distribution</b> In collaboration with local artist Wendy Dixon-Whiley we created a postcard which was distributed throughout the consultation and engagement period. This raised awareness about the development of the plan and encouraged them to engage online. The postcards were distributed throughout the Council area in shops, cafes, library, community centre and at public workshops.</p>	3000 postcards distributed
	<p><b>Mural Consultation</b> In conjunction with Wendy Dixon-Whiley we created a permanent Mural in situ during the Conquer the Summit Event. The mural raised awareness about the project and gave us an opportunity to engage with people who wouldn't normally engage with consultations of this nature. We also left a permanent artwork as a legacy for the project. It is difficult to estimate how many people on the day engaged with the project but we were able to talk to a number of adults and children and talk about their aspirations for arts in Mount Barker</p>	1 Artist 20 People
	<p><b>Artist Vision Exercise</b> This initiative involved a deeper visioning exercise with artists on three creative visions for Mount Barker. The resulting artworks are designed to communicate a vision for arts in a creative and non-linear way. Three artworks have been created in response to the provocation – these will be used to inform the plan and convey aspirations in a more captivating way. The artists involved were performing arts facilitator Jo-anne Sarre, who worked with David Booth, emerging musicians Ella and Sienna and visual artist Cat Dean.</p>	4 Artists

ACTIVITY	DETAILS	
<b>Public Forums</b>	Providing an opportunity for the general public to engage with the arts plan and provide feedback in a group environment, one online and four face-to-face workshops were presented in various locations throughout the District. The workshops involved a structured planning exercise (3-Act Narrative) where participants were asked to talk about what is happening now, what they would like the future to look like and what activities would realise their desired future. In person workshops were presented in Macclesfield, Hahndorf and Mount Barker.	62 Participants
<b>Online Engagement</b>	<p>A project page was set up on Mount Barker District Council's "Your Say" platform. A survey, ideas section and a discussion forum were put in place. A range of information was gathered via the platform and the public workshops were promoted also.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 Contributors and 124 Contributions for the forum</li> <li>• 45 Survey Respondents</li> <li>• 10 Contributors and 26 contributions for the ideas bank</li> </ul>	606 site visits 78 Contributors
<b>Written Submissions</b>	Ten written submissions were received. Nine sent directly to the consultants via email and one sent directly to Council. These have been forwarded to Council to be recorded.	10 Contributors

# Artists' Visioning

As part of the development of the Mount Barker District Council (MBDC) Arts Plan we invited three artists to develop a vision for the arts for Mount Barker. Creating a piece of art that conveyed a vision for Mount Barker using their creative skills within their own arts practice.

The purpose of this activity was to draw in creative perspectives of what the arts can do for and look like within the Mount Barker District Council both now and into the future. These “visions” provide another lens for us to look through beyond the traditional process of identify goals and strategies these art pieces are illustrative of what’s possible and desirable for arts in the Mount Barker District community.

The text from each of the visions created by the artists have been included below. Participating artists included theatre maker Jo-anne Sarre, musicians Ella and Sienna and mural artist, Cat Dean.”

## A MAGICAL REALISM STORY FOR MOUNT BARKER



*Written by Jo-anne Sarre (with special thanks to Charles Dickens & Rudyard Kipling) Dedicated to Gus Saunders for her love of sharing creative activities with children*

*Heartbeat of the teller, it grows in intensity.*

*Can you hear my heartbeat? Heartbeat continues.*

It's telling me that **today is going to be a day like no other!**

*Heart beat blends into the chortling.*

Magpies are chortling outside my bedroom window calling me to the new morning. I eagerly dress and chomp my toast, when a little poem I've been working on bubbles up inside:

*In the Land of Terah anything's possible*

*I can climb crugged mountains*

(that's rugged & craggy, in case you're wondering)

*And eat all my vegetables (my mum likes that bit)*

*There's time to envision*

*A future delectable*

*In the mysterious Land of Terah.*

And I know that I must go for a walk to one of my favourite places. Womma Mu Kurta.

It doesn't take long to get to the dusty stretch of road that winds up to the top, sometimes striding out the rhythm as I continue to recite the poem to myself, breathing in the treats that greet me of this fresh warm, autumn day.

*In the Land of Terah anything's possible*

*I can fly without wings*

*and count bounties immeasurable*

*There's time to envision*

*A future connectable*

*In the mysterious Land of Terah.*

A bank of clouds is gathering with the promise of rain, but I don't care. What are a few drops of rain?! And besides, our garden is looking a bit thirsty at the moment. And there are orange & black butterflies dancing across my path and through the bush - joining in the celebration of this soon-to-be-unforgettable day!

Around the bend, up the stretch of road past the **Yongulya** welcome sign, zig-zagging along the

bushland track I stride... and for some reason I decide to slow down, to take it all in. To my delight, there's a yellow-crested cockatoo which flies overhead, and my gaze follows its path. It alights near a youth, about my age, sitting on a large rock.

'Hi!' he simply says.

'Er... Hi!' I respond rather nervously, wriggling on the spot.

'I've been waiting for you, perfect timing.'

'Me?!'

'Of course' he replies, with a wry smile and a disarmingly direct gaze.

'Are you sure about that?' I offer, wondering about a thousand things all at once.

'Absolutely' comes the reply 'You're here, aren't you? And with a sweep of his hand he indicates the cockatoo who had by now quietly grown to the size of a small hang glider and was crouched down ready for its passengers.

'Are you ready? Hold tight.'

I nod, wide-eyed, and the next moment I am sitting behind my new-found companion on a flight to who-knows-where.

'Y'know, sometimes you have to go backwards in order to go forwards' he instructs confidently.

My tour guide clicks his fingers, and the world I know disappears. Tiwu the yellow-crested black cockatoo

spirals into the air, with me seated behind the youth, hanging on tight!

### **It is exhilarating!!**

Fences, houses, roads, vegetable fields, vineyards and bridges that are familiar, vanish. The countryside takes on an other-worldly hue, and I quickly realise that we have been thrust back in time.

We soar through the air, viewing expanses of tall luxuriant grass with the rolling hills dotted with yaccas and majestic gums. Looking closer, I see fields scattered with bright yellow yam daisies. Creeks flow into gushing rivers and kangaroos graze peacefully in mobs.

### **'Oh, this landscape is breath-takingly beautiful!!'**

I shout to the clouds.

*In the Land of Terah anything's possible*

*I can fly without wings*

*and count bounties immeasurable...*

My poem is coming to life - this is awesome!! Curiosity (well, that's insatiable curiosity in case you're wondering) overcomes my fears which are blown into the airy currents that swirl around us.

We veer east for a short time, and see an immense sheet of water, and then head north. Green grasses gradually merge into more arid rocky landscapes. We start our descent. 'This is all my mob's land,' offers the youth. 'You live on it in present time. The Ancestors want you to experience *part of everyone's story.*'

With a bump and a thump and a roll, I arrive inelegantly sprawled out on the grass, face up, near a campsite. This flying business requires a bit of practice.

'Yongulya!' cry the giggling children as they run up and pull me to my feet. 'Yongulya!' quickly comes my response – at least I know what that means!

I observe, listen and note many details that day as unfamiliar words sound around me with a multitude of tones. *Everything is intriguing...*

The group all welcome me without question – I'm guessing that you know what that's like. A gesture or two here & there, a knowing look, a smile of encouragement. My travelling companion shows me the ochre rock paintings in the nearby caves, which depict the dances I will witness later that night, then he leaves with the men to go hunting. I sit with the women, some of whom tend to the children's needs in between grinding kangaroo grass seed into flour, on stones. This flour is mixed with water to create damper. Others skilfully weave strips of flax into twine to repair fishing nets and make baskets. Occasionally the older children check the nearby stream, which offers fish via an intricate netting system. It feels like a celebration is being prepared, and, as the light fades, a feast indeed is offered and greatly enjoyed. When the communal fire becomes coals, an elder shares a story occasionally glancing to the clear starlit sky. Then, voices join in song, painted dancers stamp their rhythms on the Earth, while others beat possum-skin drums. Somehow, I know that this is all a gesture of thanks for the immeasurable bounties.

*Fire Song by David Booth*

My travelling companion takes me beyond the campfire gathering to a clearing and invites me to sit down. He sits next to me. I can feel the warmth of the Earth. I gaze up at the stars like the elder had done. 'They have sparkled since the Dreaming right up to our time and will continue into eternity' I muse, and look across to my companion. He nods. Hmm. He can read my thoughts. This is certainly no ordinary journey. *Silence. Earth Heartbeat.*

After a while I can feel it. *Earth Heartbeat.* The heartbeat of our Earth. *Heartbeat (a bit longer in duration)* Why hadn't I ever noticed this before? *Heartbeat for a longer period of time, which merges with the traveller's heartbeat. Silence.*

What the Ancestors want me to experience must've been shared, because with another click of his fingers we're flying again. Back towards the summit on the magnificent Tiwu. My poem sounded softly inside me.

*In the Land of Terah anything's possible  
I can fly without wings  
and count bounties immeasurable,  
There's time to envision  
A future connectable  
In the mysterious Land of Terah.*

Mid-flight the memories weave around me... *Earth Heartbeat pulses* - the colours, sounds, rhythms, forms and words that have filled that special day. It is a mingling, merging pool of creativity expressed from Ancient Times.

*Earth Heartbeat, joined by human heartbeat. Silence.*

Pure connectedness.

Where to next?' I ask tentatively, still trying to digest all that has happened. 'Three months from the now' answers the youth, and clicks his fingers.

Night changes to day, and the clouds whizz past us as we soar into the sunlight. It bathes my face and I bravely stretch out my arms, balancing on Tiwu, receiving the warmth into my limbs. 'Why?! I wonder 'Why is this happening to me? Why must it happen now? And why do I know, deep down, that this is all meant to be?' Soon after we begin our descent.

With a bump and a thump and a roll, I arrive inelegantly sprawled out on a cement pavement, face up, near a building. Ouch!! This flying business *still* requires more practice!

A small group of people, brief cases and papers in hands, head intently for an imposing two-storey building which is nearby. They don't appear to notice me or my huge embarrassment. I scramble to my feet as soon as possible, rubbing my bruised hip, and look around. I can't see my tour guide anywhere... Um... What now?

I decide to follow the group. It is chilly, and I shudder to try to get warm, pulling my clothes around me in vain. I feel very alone.

We jostle into a meeting room, and in my haste, I accidentally bump against someone and turn around without thinking to say 'Sorry'. But they don't feel my blunder, can't see me, can't hear me. I am the invisible observer.

*Layered overlay of meeting voices.*

I'm not sure how long the discussions ran, progressing

from polite to intense to downright hostile – enough time for numerous glasses of water to be drunk, much furrowing of brows and shaking of heads, and plenty of stern statements and finger pointing. One person paces about the room to gain composure, another shuffles papers, yet another becomes intensely interested in the doodling in their notebook. You know what that's like. There's the discomfort and strain, each person desperate for their views to be heard.

During that time the meeting room fills with shadowy visitors, also not noticed by the debaters. The visitors are listening intently to the proceedings. I see my travelling companion and the elders from the campsite, standing opposite me. 'Oh, that's good,' I note to myself, much relieved, 'I'm no longer alone in my ponderings!' I see many women in laced bodices, woollen shawls, bonnets and full skirts from by-gone ages, and bearded gentlemen in top hats and black jackets. The more visitors arrive, the more the air bristles with expectation.

*Layered overlay of meeting voices, which builds under the narration.*

Voices continue to rise in intensity.

A member stands and thumps the table, another calls 'Calm down! Order please, ladies and gentlemen!' and yet another claims 'A decision's been reached, has it not?' when...

**'The question is' shouts one voice above all the others 'what are the consequences for the future if we don't?'**

*Silence.*

The Earth begins to rumble and a cyclone hits!

Walls dissolve into powder in a deafening roar as tables, chairs, people, silent witnesses, and papers are flung in all directions. I get sucked into the whirlpool of chaos and don't know which way is up or down. Dust billows in monstrous surges as screams and shouts are heard trailing off into the distance. I gasp for breath, choking on the dust. Suddenly, my hand is grasped, and I am drawn up above the chaos to find myself again on Tiwu, flying over the turmoil.

*Heartbeat of the teller, it grows in intensity & arrhythmia with the anxiety and fear.*

My head is spinning, and I want to cry, but the pressure builds and there's no relief.

*Heartbeat of the teller, slows down and comes back into a rhythm.*

Slowly I get my bearings and realise that I'm clutching my companion's arms so hard that I've dug my fingernails into one of them.

'Oops – sorry!' I exclaim, with a nervous laugh.

*Heartbeat of the teller, back in a rhythm.*

'There's more to come,' my companion shouts over his shoulder, 'you up for it?'. I shrug my shoulders feebly because I don't actually know.

*Silence.*

'You've got to choose now,' continues the youth without any further prompting. 'There's an unwelcome future

calling us. Reckon it'll take lots of courage to face. We can turn back now if you want, or go on.'

*Heartbeat of the teller, in a regular rhythm.*

'It feels like there's a lot at stake, but I don't know exactly what it is.' I call out mid-flight, and he merely nods.

'Can we do this together?'

'Of course.'

'Then I can say "Yes"!

"Into the-not-so-distant future" announces the youth, and clicks his fingers.

This time, I close my eyes and hold on tighter than ever before. I can feel the wind rushing past, and Tiwu spiralling in a very large orbit. We could be circumnavigating Australia, for all I know. It's getting colder and colder, so maybe we're heading south? I'm not sure if I'm ready to face what is about to unfold. I anticipate that you know that feeling.

'It's time to open your eyes' advises the youth.

Tiwu is hovering, gliding. We dip and rise, avoiding the buildings and landscape features shrouded in a strange mist. Everything looks grey. Grey buildings, grey trees, grey people occasionally moving between grey buildings. I realise that I can't hear any bird song, only the whirring of machines.

Robots chug along the fields in endless motion, tilling the soil. Driverless delivery vans and cars navigate the

streets. In another field, crops are growing – but from this distance they look grey too. How can that be? We fly over a school yard, and as a bell rings children shuffle through the mist to the outdoor seats in their grey uniforms, to eat their grey snacks, listless & burdened. There's no play equipment or grass, only gravel and cement. It seems like play was considered superfluous long ago. 'Do I assume correctly?' I ask the youth silently in my thoughts, and he nods. As we hover, I look closer into the classrooms and see there are only screens, no teachers in sight. No real-life kindness, no connection here. Just sleek, slick desks in windowless rooms. It's suffocating.

We hover to another part of the school. There is a tower room with one lone adult sitting in front of numerous screens and gadgets for regulating, controlling and monitoring who-knows-what. Arrivals, departures, room temperatures/humidity, pollution control, lesson content and viewing the children perhaps? I manage to catch a look at their face and note that their expression is as despondent and listless as those of the children. I'm guessing that if we visited a multitude of places in this dismal land-of-the-not-so-distant-future, it would be the same – grey, lonely.

**'Why is this happening?'** I shout to my tour guide above the din of the machines. 'People have forgotten their stories' comes the reply.

I feel the sorrowful burden of this terrain. I want to jump off Tiwu and sing and dance and shout poetry and put on my clown nose to delight the children and make them all laugh, asking them all to join in the merriment. I

desperately want to ask the adults **'Can't we stop this?'**

And with a sweep of his hand, my companion reveals something I haven't seen before. Throughout the school yard, small glimmers of light start to shine. Looking closer, I can see that each light glows within the breast of a child.

My companion answers my silent question: 'It's their unique gifts, their dreams and hopes shining like jewels. They still live in the children but can't be born.'

**'If we gather these jewels, and let them shine in the present, will it change all this?'** I urgently ask. Next minute I find myself in front of my companion, holding the reins guiding Tiwu. I take that as a 'Yes' to my question. We begin the descent.

With a bump and a thump and a... jump I land on the ground, as agile as can be. At the same moment, the strange mist that has shrouded the landscape changes colour and form – we are confronting a massive dragon, sharp claws poised to attack, and jaws open with flames lashing towards us.

We lunge back onto Tiwu to escape, the dragon in rapid pursuit. As our speed increases, so does the dragon's flight, its great wings propelling it forward. We dart side to side through the air, looking over our shoulders. Then, we swirl around to face its vengeful presence, to calculate our next move. There's a moment of agitated stillness, when suddenly Tiwu spirals towards the stars.

I call on the Elders to help us, I call on all the women and men on whose shoulders we stand, I take a full,

deep breath to banish my fears and anxieties, and immediately know what to do.

Bracing myself, I steer Tiwu, as we double-back and then... **plunge headlong into the jaws of the dragon!!**

#### *Music & soundscape*

It's dark, really dark. Gradually I can begin to discern shapes in the greyness. "That was some ride!" quips my companion.

We've landed near the school yard and the mist has cleared. Without knowing why, the children come up to us and begin to tell their stories, their dreams, their hopes. Like jewels, I gather them in my memory, storing them in a magic sack of possibilities. We're envisioning a future connectable.

#### *Silence, then magpies chortle.*

You may already be anticipating the end of this story.

I can tell you, that we fly back to the meeting with the great debate still raging.

I can tell you, that I unpack the magic sack of possibilities, and as I do so the stories of the children touch the listeners, *without them knowing*. The thousands of artists of the future appear in their midst (it's getting really crowded in there) – musicians play, poets recite, actors perform, weavers weave, dancers leap, potters mould, singers sing, and storytellers recall the story of where we have been and where we wish to go.

*And, as this takes place, I know* that colour begins to come back into the land-of-the-not-so-distant-future. A

rainbow shines. And here, the ancestors smile to each other, nod to me and depart.

What I can't tell you is what unfolds in any detail, because we are now back in the present.

#### **What happens relies on you, and me, and all the people who shape our future...**

#### *Heart beat of the teller, in a rhythm.*

There's a soft rain falling on Womma Mu Kurta when I say farewell to my amazingly wise and compassionate travelling companion. **This has certainly been a day like no other!** *Earth heartbeat, joined by other heart beats.*

Striding towards home, on the afternoon of that very same autumn day, the butterflies still dance across my path. *I feel just like a butterfly that is slowly emerging from its cocoon, and I see the world anew. I am so happy and so grateful.*

#### **Can you hear the beating of OUR hearts?**

*Softly spoken, with heart beats underneath.*

*In the Land of Terah **anything is possible...***

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Image: Zinia King (Ink Pot Arts logo image)

Narration: Jo-anne Sarre & David Booth © Jo-anne Sarre & Mount Barker District Council  
Fire Song: David Booth  
Soundscape & Music: Max Tulysewski





2030

*"That's great you can come – when you get to Mount Barker, turn left at our evolving community sculptural park until you get to the Open Street Theatre Lane – (you'll see the stunning Indigenous artwork on each corner that respects that our community resides on the traditional ancestral land of the Peramangk People - you will not miss it!). I'll meet you at the breathtaking wildflower mural and then we can walk under the bridge that was mosaiced by the year 12 art students in a collaborative project to stroll through the Laratinga Wetlands. I have lunch booked at one of the street cafés near the tall ceramic broilgas and we can look out for the hidden native animal rock art ... I have heard that the frog has not been found yet! – it's a beaut spot – It is such a dynamic, green, vibrant, bustling and popular place to meet and connect. We will also be able to see the current town square public artist in residence working with other aspiring young artists and keen local volunteers – it is very calming to watch .... "*

## PUBLIC ART CONNECTS ... IT CONNECTS PEOPLE, SPACES, PLACES, CULTURES AND TIME.

After moving to Mount Barker from the outer's suburbs, I noticed a significant change in the amount of community connection around us and how very quickly we were welcomed into its bustle of networks. We speak with our neighbours regularly, we put each other's bins out, the small coffee shops know their regulars on a first name basis, there was an instant 'village of mums' when I moved here.

Mount Barker holds a 'country town' vibe, with a magnificent rural landscape on our doorsteps brimming with wildlife and native flora. I believe connecting with this nature and the people living around you is paramount to the core of this vibe. I feel this 'vibe' continues to grow, even though our population and housing development has increased rapidly.

Public art can emphasise, reflect and contribute to the nature of this vibe - it can be core to maintaining connection, towards having a community with something in common with each other, regardless of how large the population grows.

Public art is proven to have a strong impact on improving a community's wellbeing - mentally, economically and culturally, so it naturally follows that my vision for a connected, vibrant, happy and bustling community revolves around displays of accessible and meaningful public art integrated into all development, community and town planning. My vision for public art is that people will describe, explain and emote Mount Barker with the art that is within and around them – where art is directly connected to the soul, the vibe, of the community who reside in and around the area.

*Written by Cat Dean*

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“My Country” by David Booth.

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**MOUNT BARKER**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



This plan has been developed Maz McGann of Play Your Part and Leonie Boothby of Leonie Boothby and Associates in collaboration with Mount Barker District Council. It has been informed by a range of key stakeholders including local business, community groups, arts organisations and the general public.