



WOOLLAHRA ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

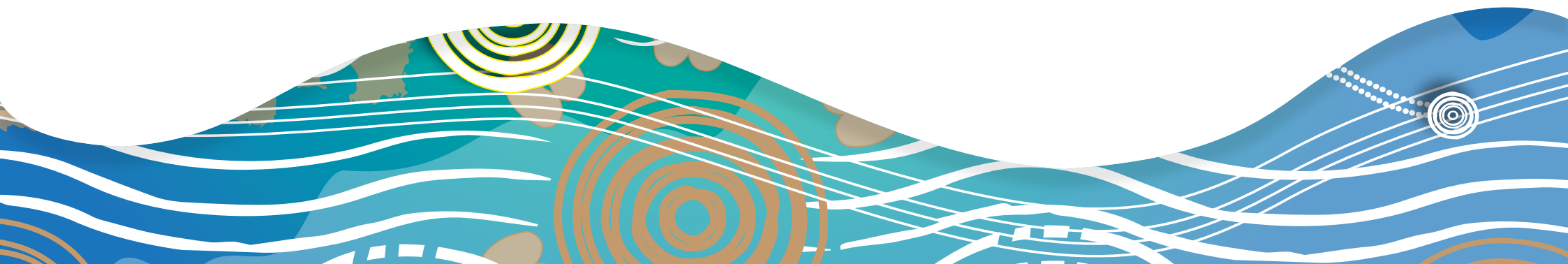
2024–2028

December 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Woollahra Council acknowledges the Gadigal and Birrabirragal people who are the Traditional Custodians of this land and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Artwork below by Jordan Ardler (detail)



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Research to Inform the Arts and Culture Strategy	

Cover image: Tree veneration Society –
Woollahra Cultural grant recipient.



Some of the winners from the Youth Photographic Award & Short Film Prize 2024
with Woollahra Mayor Sarah Swan and Judge Aliana Gozin'a.

Message from the Mayor and General Manager



Woollahra Council has a proud record of leadership and innovation in both the arts and cultural development and we recognise the valuable role arts and culture play in providing community connection and wellbeing, and celebrating emerging talent and artistic excellence.

We host a range of artistic and cultural events and programs at the Council Chambers and surrounding grounds, at our Woollahra Libraries and the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf, as well as in our public spaces.

I am particularly proud of our innovative and highly regarded Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, which celebrates emerging and established artists and the myriad of arts and cultural events and ideas that receive funding support through our grants program.

Through research and consultation conducted by the University of Newcastle and commissioned by us, we have a clearer understanding of where to direct our strategic actions and resources over the next four years so we can continue to offer a diverse mix

of arts and cultural opportunities, that maximises collaborations and partnerships and meets the needs of the community.

Celebrate, participate, activate, lead and advocate and sustain are the key focus areas identified for this draft Strategy. The actions outlined in each focus area will improve our commitment to development of arts and culture in our community, close gaps and increase representation in areas of strong demand including: fostering First Nations and local history and heritage, expanding public art, boosting inclusion, diversity and accessibility priorities, activating public spaces and venues with more creative events and aligning our arts and cultural events to our Vision, Mission and Operational Plan.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the development of this Strategy.

Councillor Sarah Swan

Mayor of Woollahra



I am looking forward to seeing our inaugural Arts and Culture Strategy come to life in a range of ways that demonstrates our commitment to a thriving, inclusive, sustainable and resilient community.

This Strategy reflects the community priorities for arts and cultural development and it outlines challenges and opportunities to consider, so we can continue to deliver activities, events and programs that residents and visitors love, and that allow us to strengthen our artistic and cultural collaborations and partnerships.

In recognising the social and economic benefits and value of arts and culture through this draft Strategy we will continue to expand our commitment to the arts and culture in Woollahra.

Craig Swift-McNair

General Manager



Collins Lane, Rose Bay –
Streets as Shared Spaces, Placemaking project

Executive Summary

About this strategy

Woollahra Council recognises the important role of arts and culture in contributing to creative, as well as economic and social outcomes for our community. By fostering creativity, local identity and opportunities to participate and connect, through arts and culture, a positive impact on community belonging, inclusion, cohesion, economic development and civic engagement can be achieved.

The Woollahra Arts and Culture Strategy and Action Plan, 2024–2028 documents our commitment to the residents of Woollahra to support a creative community. This Strategy and Action Plan outlines the goals, actions and priorities for arts and culture that Woollahra Council (Council) will implement over the next four years. This Strategy contributes to the outcomes of Council’s Community Strategic Plan and to achieving the aspirations and outcomes of a suite of other policies and strategies which aim to deliver a creative and vibrant community for the benefit of our residents, creative community, businesses and visitors.

This is Woollahra’s first Arts and Culture Strategy. It has been designed to create a framework to define the purpose and direction of Woollahra’s cultural life and bring together the diverse arts, culture and creative activities being delivered within the Municipality.

The Strategy defines arts and culture in their broadest sense, to encompass the visual, performing and literary arts and Council services that range from the Woollahra Libraries, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf, to Council’s Grants Program.

Executive Summary

The strategy is founded on the principle that arts and culture have a value beyond their intrinsic nature.

As Woollahra's first arts and culture plan, the Strategy lays the foundation for future plans and establishes a legacy for future generations. Many local governments across the country have been working to an arts and culture plan over many years. Their experience has demonstrated that achieving the ambition of a creative, local community is evolutionary and requires ongoing commitment.

The Strategy provides more detail as to how we will meet our arts and culture goals through collaborative effort across all divisions of Council and through building and sustaining partnerships with government agencies, surrounding Councils, businesses, schools, community organisations and the Municipality's creatives.

In preparing the strategy, the contemporary context of arts and culture was explored and best practice examples of strategy for arts, culture and creative life were investigated. Residents of Woollahra, arts and culture stakeholders and local creatives informed the Strategy and Action Plan, through workshops, interviews and an online survey. The result is a strategic approach which reflects an understanding of the context locally, nationally and internationally and a consensus about our aspirations for the future of arts and culture in Woollahra.

Key findings relating to the development of the Strategy have been documented in a Research Report that informs the Arts and Culture Strategy. This Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Research Report, which appears as an Appendix to the Strategy.



Mui Mui Bumer Gedlam dancers at the 2023 *Heart in Art* exhibition opening, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf



1 | Our Strategy

Beach, Barks, Banksias
mural by Sharon Billinge
in Percival Lane, Rose Bay

1.1 | How we engaged the community



Event Space, Woollahra Library at Double Bay

Data gathered from an initial, desktop study of the literature on arts and culture trends and issues, strategic plans from neighbouring Councils and policy documents from national and NSW government agencies, was supplemented by evidence of expressed needs, derived from consultation with the community to inform the plan.

A total of 133 people from across the following groups and individuals was consulted:

- Members of the local creative community
- Local business people and owners of commercial arts and culture enterprises
- Representatives of local community services providers
- Stakeholders from Waverley, Mosman and City of Sydney Councils
- Representatives of Create NSW and Creative Australia
- Delegate from the office of Allegra Spender MP
- Members of Council committees – the Public Art Panel, Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize Committee, Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
- Councillors
- Staff from across Council.

The Gujaga Foundation was contracted to consult the local First Nations community on behalf of Woollahra Council and to provide a short report that outlined key strengths and opportunities to be addressed by the Strategy. Consultation was also undertaken with two First Nation artists/organisations, who have previously partnered with Council.

Following consultation with the community and stakeholders, an Action Planning Workshop was conducted with staff from across Woollahra Council, to interpret the outcomes and arrive at recommended actions for implementation of the Strategy.

1.2 | Arts and culture in the future

A key feature of planning for arts, culture and creative life is the long-term and evolutionary nature of culture, the changing character, identity and priorities of communities and the impacts of new technologies and industries. Approaching strategy for creative life requires a view of both 'near' and 'far' horizons.

The Strategy considers the following themes in the development of the Action Plan to transition Council's journey in the delivery of a thriving, inclusive community through arts and culture:

- Embedding the place of First Nations culture in Australian art and culture policy and practice – contribution to truth-telling and reconciliation
- Affordability during times of economic challenge
- Creative re-use of vacant spaces
- Re-defining what constitutes a 'creative' or 'cultural' institution or space including recognising the impact of technologies and digital media on definitions of space (virtual space)
- New forms of expression and audience – shift to technology driven production, performance and exhibition of cultural forms



Gamay Dancers, Murray Rose Pool, Redleaf performing the Marida Dance

- The broadening of definitions of arts and culture to include activities such as film and the opening up of venues for cultural activity
- Need to demonstrate public value generated through arts and culture
- Supporting economies of scale – through shared resources and assets and the creation of arts and culture clusters and 'hotspots,' both locally and regionally
- Creating opportunities for experimentation and risk-taking with art as a creative catalyst
- Participant-driven creation and collaborative practice
- Leveraging art and culture for transformation – generating, sharing knowledge and promoting learning – moving beyond art and culture as 'entertainment'
- Increasing role for arts and culture in inclusion and belonging.

1.3 | Our Vision, Purpose, Role and Principles

Our Community Vision A thriving, inclusive, sustainable and resilient community that will benefit future generations	
The Purpose of the Arts & Culture Strategy	<p>The Woollahra Arts and Culture Strategy provides the framework for Woollahra to become a creative and vibrant community. It will promote opportunities for innovation, creativity and for both practicing and participating in arts and cultural life. The Strategy reflects Council’s vision to create ‘A thriving, inclusive, sustainable and resilient community that will benefit future generations’</p>
Woollahra Council’s Role in Arts and Culture	<p>Enabler: create an environment for arts, culture and heritage to flourish through clear processes, capacity building, cultural facilities, and supporting community-led initiatives and networks.</p> <p>Commissioner: directly engage artists and creative businesses to deliver creative projects, events or activate public spaces.</p> <p>Custodian: caretaker of significant arts and heritage assets.</p> <p>Regulator: monitor compliance of events through planning controls, building regulation, licensing, waste management, occupational health and safety, traffic management, food safety and public safety.</p> <p>Collaborator: partner and collaborate with the community, arts organisations, other local government organisations, state and commonwealth agencies and businesses to support arts and cultural activity.</p> <p>Advocate: leverage Council’s position to generate new opportunities and resourcing, and reduce barriers to creative activity.</p>
Principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Woollahra Council recognizes the many diverse forms and experiences that make up ‘arts and culture’ and, in so doing, adopts broad and inclusive definitions for this strategy 2 Developing a creative, vibrant arts and culture in Woollahra is a long-term commitment – this strategy is the starting point. Woollahra’s strategic approach and outcomes will grow, stretch and mature over time 3 Woollahra’s approach to arts, culture and creativity is a response to the needs, aspirations, strengths and opportunities of the local community and to the broader context of arts and cultural life regionally, nationally and internationally 4 Woollahra’s Arts and Culture Strategy complements and is complemented by other key, strategic documents, including the Reconciliation Action Plan, the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and the Events Strategy, within the over-arching directions and priorities of the Community Strategic Plan.

1.3 | Our Vision, Purpose, Role and Principles

Our Community Vision	A thriving, inclusive, sustainable and resilient community that will benefit future generations	
Principles	5	Good governance and decision making - are key to the successful delivery of a vibrant, creative Woollahra. Woollahra Council has implemented the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee to support Council in this goal
	6	Arts and culture are a key factor in creating and sustaining a connected, inclusive community, where people feel a sense of identity and belonging
	7	Arts and cultural programs, exhibitions, events and experiences should be accessible, affordable and inclusive – everyone has a right to participate in creative life
	8	The primary focus of arts and cultural life in Woollahra is on our people, our residents and community, but we recognise that Woollahra is also part of a broader, arts and culture ecosystem that comprises surrounding suburbs, the city centre, major arts and culture institutions, private, commercial and not-for-profit arts and culture businesses
	9	Woollahra Council’s investment in arts and culture is premised on spending community funds wisely and for best value. We will look to opportunities to subsidise Council’s investment through grant funding, philanthropic and sponsorship arrangements
	10	In implementing its Arts and Culture Strategy, Woollahra Council will act within Council’s framework of integrity and respect for people. It will aspire to excellent performance and deliver professional, quality services. It will be open, accountable and communicate effectively. The community has also asked for a strategy that is brave, ambitious and outcomes-focused

1.4 | Our Key Focus Areas, Goals and Outcomes

Key Focus Area 1: Celebrate

Goal 1.1:
Celebrate First Nations Heritage and Stories

Outcome:
Representation of, and engagement with, Woollahra's First Nations people demonstrates our commitment and leadership to reconciliation through arts and cultural programs and activities

Goal 1.2:
Celebrate Woollahra's Heritage and Stories

Outcome:
The people of Woollahra understand and value their shared history, local character and local stories

Goal 1.3:
Celebrate Woollahra's Unique 'Place' Through Public Art

Outcome:
Council's Public Art program, including its role in placemaking and in celebrating local stories, continues to evolve



Cooper Park Community Hall mural
by Sharon Billinge, Bellevue Hill



Pelicans by Folko Cooper, Rose Bay Wharf

1.4 | Our Key Focus Areas, Goals and Outcomes

Key Focus Area 2: Participate

Goal 2.1:

Build Community Participation in Arts and Culture from the grassroots up

Outcome:

The Woollahra community actively engages in and benefits from, arts and cultural activities that are interesting, accessible and diverse

Goal 2.2:

Provide Connectivity for the Woollahra Community to Sydney-Wide Arts, Culture and Creative Experiences

Outcome:

Woollahra's community has access to a diverse range of arts and cultural exhibitions, programs, performances and activities within the broader network

Goal 2.3:

Enhance Community Awareness of Woollahra's Arts and Culture Offer through strategic use of Council's Media and Promotions

Outcome:

The community's awareness of and engagement in arts, culture and creativity is increased

Key Focus Area 3: Activate

Goal 3.1:

Activate Open Space through Arts, Culture and Creativity

Outcome:

Woollahra's built environment and community spaces support creative life and contribute to community identity, connection and wellbeing

Goal 3.2:

Activate Council and Community Venues through Arts, Culture and Creativity

Outcome:

The Woollahra community has access to venues, places and spaces to practice, deliver and participate in creative community activities

1.4 | Our Key Focus Areas, Goals and Outcomes

Key Focus Area 4: Lead and Advocate

<p>Goal 4.1: Lead and Manage Strategic Relationships and Partnerships</p>	<p>Outcome: Council develops a sustainable arts and culture framework that supports the achievement of arts and cultural outcomes</p>
<p>Goal 4.2: Lead Woollahra’s Creative Framework</p>	<p>Outcome: Woollahra’s achievements and reputation as a creative community continue to grow</p>

Key Focus Area 5: Sustain

<p>Goal 5.1: Work Strategically to Secure Alternative Funding Streams to Complement Council Funding of Arts and Culture</p>	<p>Outcome: Woollahra Council’s contribution to local arts and culture is enhanced, within the parameters of Council’s existing funding budget</p>
<p>Goal 5.2: Review Internal Capability to support achievement of Woollahra’s Strategic Outcomes for Arts and Culture</p>	<p>Outcome: Woollahra Council has sufficient capability to deliver the outcomes of the Arts and Culture Strategy and Action Plan</p>
<p>Goal 5.3: Maintain Good Governance for Arts and Culture Strategy, Policy and Processes</p>	<p>Outcome: Council’s planning and decision-making processes for arts and culture are transparent and consistent with the Arts and Culture Strategy</p>
<p>Goal 5.4: Evaluate and Measure Performance</p>	<p>Outcome: Woollahra Council’s investment in arts and culture is measured and reported</p>



2 | Our Action Plan

Creative play in public spaces, Rose Bay

2 | Our Action Plan

Key Focus Area 1: Celebrate

Goal 1.1: Celebrate Woollahra's First Nations Heritage and Stories

OUTCOME: Representation of, and engagement with, Woollahra's First Nations people demonstrates our commitment and leadership to reconciliation through arts and cultural programs and activities.

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Consult with the Gujaga Foundation and La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council on approaches to story telling about culture, language and history, to encourage truth telling and embed First Nations culture into arts and culture programs, beyond NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events		2025/26 Ongoing		Council wide
2 Investigate the development and delivery of a Cultural Walks program, in partnership with Gujaga Foundation and La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council			2026/27	Community & Culture
3 Support First Nations organisations/individuals with their applications for Council Grants and EOI programs to foster engagement, representation and positive outcomes	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture

2 | Our Action Plan

Goal 1.2: Celebrate Woollahra’s Heritage and Stories

OUTCOME: The people of Woollahra understand and value their shared history, local character and local stories

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Explore opportunities to celebrate Woollahra’s architecture and heritage in partnership with community groups		2025/26		Strategic Planning & Place Woollahra Libraries
2 Explore opportunities to celebrate Woollahra’s diverse cultures by promoting the availability of Council’s Grants Program and Outgoing Sponsorship Program to local community		2025/26		Community & Culture Strategic Planning & Place Woollahra Libraries

Goal 1.3: Celebrate Woollahra’s Unique ‘Place’ Through Public Art

OUTCOME: Council’s Public Art program, including its role in placemaking and in celebrating local stories, continues to evolve

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Investigate suitable open space locations for a Woollahra public art trail / sculpture park, in consultation with Woollahra Council’s Public Art Panel.			2027/28	Community & Culture

2 | Our Action Plan

Key Focus Area 2: Participate

Goal 2.1: Build Community Participation in Arts and Culture from the grassroots up

OUTCOME: The Woollahra community actively engages in and benefits from, arts and cultural activities that are interesting, accessible and diverse

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Investigate opportunities to deliver exhibitions, programs, performances and events that enable the community to encounter all forms of arts and culture in their local area to build cultural literacy (introduce people to and increase their understanding of diverse cultural forms)		2025/26 Ongoing		Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
2 Enhance engagement of children, youth, families and schools in exhibitions, programs and events at Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf		2025/6 Ongoing		Community & Culture
3 Actively seek younger volunteers and interns to participate across Council's Arts and Cultural programs	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
4 Continue to provide free and low-cost Council programs, events, exhibitions and creative experiences to support access to Arts and Cultural life and mitigate the impacts of the cost of living crisis	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
5 Explore opportunities to promote performing arts and live music (with an emphasis on outdoor experiences) including through Council's Grants Program and new Outgoing Sponsorship Program			2026/27	Community & Culture Strategic Planning & Place Woollahra Libraries
6 Grow and develop Woollahra Digital Literary Award by seeking sponsorship opportunities to raise the profile of the award and broaden categories	2024/25 Ongoing			Woollahra Libraries
7 Support Woollahra Libraries' role as writer's centre by providing writing development opportunities such as writing workshops and investigation of a Writers in Residence program	2024/25 Ongoing			Woollahra Libraries

2 | Our Action Plan

OUTCOME: The Woollahra community actively engages in and benefits from, arts and cultural activities that are interesting, accessible and diverse

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
8 Create opportunities to showcase visual arts within Library spaces through pop up installations and collaboration through Council's Artists in Residence program	2024/25 Ongoing			Woollahra Libraries
9 Build the profile of the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf's existing program of accessible tours, to encourage wider, more inclusive and regular visitation by people with a disability, older people and people from 'hard to reach' groups within the community		2025/26 Ongoing		Community & Culture
10 Explore best practice in accessibility for people with disabilities when delivering the Arts and Culture Strategy			2026/27	Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
11 Investigate opportunities for young creatives to be more involved in Council's Arts and Cultural programs			2026/27 Ongoing	Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries

2 | Our Action Plan

Goal 2.2: Provide Connectivity for the Woollahra Community to Sydney-Wide Arts, Culture and Creative Experiences

OUTCOME: Woollahra’s community has access to a diverse range of arts and cultural exhibitions, programs, performances and activities within the broader network

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Identify opportunities to connect with or to deliver programs, exhibitions or performances that complement arts and cultural events and festivals in neighbouring suburbs and across Greater Sydney		2025/26 Ongoing		Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
2 Work with local community transport providers to develop and deliver a schedule of accessible, quarterly ‘art explorer’ bus tours, viewing Woollahra’s public art and visiting private and public galleries and other cultural institutions			2027/28	Community & Culture
3 Investigate ways to deliver additional world-class spaces for arts and culture, in particular for performing arts and visual arts.			2027/28	Community & Culture

Goal 2.3: Enhance Community Awareness of Woollahra’s Arts and Culture offer through strategic use of Council’s media and promotions

OUTCOME: The community’s awareness of and engagement in arts, culture and creativity is increased

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Investigate opportunities to enhance digital advertising of Arts and Culture across the Municipality			2027/28	Communications & Engagement

2 | Our Action Plan

Key Focus Area 3: Activate

Goal 3.1: Activate Open Space through Arts, Culture and Creativity

OUTCOME: Woollahra's built environment and community spaces support creative life and contribute to community identity, connection and wellbeing

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Consult with relevant internal and external stakeholders to streamline relevant processes to facilitate opportunities for street closure to support activation and events		2025/26		Development Assessment Engineering Services Strategic Planning & Place
2 Explore options to streamline processes for Development Approvals for arts, cultural and creative events		2025/26		Communications & Engagement Community & Culture Development Assessment Strategic Planning & Place
3 Identify opportunities, during the planning stage of capital infrastructure (both new and upgrades), to incorporate public art into Council's places and spaces	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture Open Space & Trees Properties & Projects
4 Explore external grant funding and/or partnership opportunities to support activation of public spaces with art installations		2025/26 Ongoing		Community & Culture Strategic Planning & Place

2 | Our Action Plan

Goal 3.2: Activate Council and Community Venues through Arts, Culture and Creativity

OUTCOME: The Woollahra Community has access to venues, places and spaces to practice, deliver and participate in creative community activities

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Conduct an audit of Woollahra’s portfolio of community venues to evaluate functionality, utilisation, constraints and opportunities and to determine possibilities for their use as multipurpose facilities (community and cultural purposes) into the future		2025/26 Ongoing		Community & Culture
2 Consult with the Infrastructure and Sustainability Division to identify and scope items for consideration in future Capital Works and Asset Management Plans, to enhance Council’s venues and indoor spaces, including Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf (2025/26) and Woollahra Libraries (2027/2028), so they are fit for purpose for creative practice		2025/26	2027/28	Community & Culture Properties & Projects Woollahra Libraries
3 Investigate opportunities to activate selected community venues (eg: EJ Ward Community Centre, Canonbury Cottage) for multi-disciplinary Creative uses via long-term lease / licence arrangements or creatives-led initiatives			2027/28	Community & Culture
4 Where appropriate, incorporate expenditure for Arts and Culture projects (consistent with adopted policies and strategies) in the Woollahra Section 7.12 Development Contributions Plan.		2025/26		Community & Culture Strategic Planning & Place
5 Investigate partnerships and collaborations with schools, churches and other private spaces, to increase public access and activation for performances and rehearsals and other arts and cultural purposes			2026/27	Community & Culture
6 Explore potential for activations through the clustering of activities and programs around Council’s significant arts programs, such as Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, to promote and increase visibility of the wider Woollahra arts and culture community.		2025/26		Community & Culture

2 | Our Action Plan

Key Focus Area 4: Lead and Advocate

Goal 4.1: Lead and Manage Strategic Relationships and Partnerships

OUTCOME: Council develops a sustainable Arts and Culture framework that supports the achievement of arts and cultural outcomes

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Foster strategic relationships with NSW government, Commonwealth government and other agencies, such as consulates and businesses, to enhance opportunities for partnership, collaboration and support for Arts and Culture in Woollahra			2026/27	Community & Culture Strategic Planning & Place Woollahra Libraries
2 Develop a network with other Councils and key cultural institutions to exchange ideas, undertake joint initiatives and maximise resources, particularly in the areas of visual and performing arts	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture
3 Use the stakeholder and industry partner map to avoid duplication of arts and cultural services and programs, and to identify strategic opportunities for potential partnership and collaboration			2026/27	Community & Culture
4 Coordinate an annual gathering for the Woollahra creatives community	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture

2 | Our Action Plan

Goal 4.2: Lead Woollahra’s Creative Framework

OUTCOME: Council develops a sustainable Arts and Culture framework that supports the achievement of arts and cultural outcomes

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Review the Gallery at Redleaf Exhibition Policy and service model to ensure best practice in supporting exhibiting artists, meeting audience expectations and broadening the Gallery’s visitor and audience base, with implementation the following year	2024/25	2025/26		Community & Culture
2 Support local creatives to access Council funding and opportunities such as Grants and EOI programs, as well as via other agencies, (eg: promoting awareness of opportunities, supporting applicants via grant-writing workshops etc)	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture
3 Review the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize and collection model to enhance sustainability, prestige and viability of the program			2026/27	Community & Culture
4 Investigate the development of an annual Woollahra Small Painting Prize			2027/28	Community & Culture

2 | Our Action Plan

Key Focus Area 5: Sustain

Goal 5.1: Work Strategically to Secure Alternative Funding Streams to Complement Council Funding of Arts and Culture

OUTCOME: Woollahra Council's contribution to local Arts and Culture is enhanced, within the parameters of Council's existing funding budget

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Work with the Woollahra Arts and Culture Advisory Committee to identify opportunities to attract philanthropic investment in Woollahra's Arts and Cultural life		2025/26		Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
2 Pursue NSW Government and Commonwealth Government grants and funding opportunities by application to relevant funding programs		2025/26		Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
3 Support the development of the Woollahra film and music sectors, by investigating opportunities arising from the Sound NSW Screen and Contemporary Music Strategy			2027/28	Community & Culture

Goal 5.2: Review Internal Capability to Support Achievement of Woollahra's Strategic Outcomes for Arts and Culture

OUTCOME: Woollahra Council has sufficient capability to deliver the outcomes of the Arts and Culture Strategy and Action Plan

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Review the capability of the Woollahra Council's Arts and Culture team and identify options to address 'gaps' in capability, to support achievement of strategic outcomes		2025/26		Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
2 Investigate the creation of a traineeship or internship position to support Woollahra Council in achieving strategic outcomes and in establishing its 'next generation' of Arts and Culture professionals			2026/27	Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries
3 Enhance Council's capability to achieve outcomes of the Arts and Culture Strategy by addressing gaps in Council's First Nations workforce capability			2027/28	Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries

2 | Our Action Plan

Goal 5.3: Maintain Good Governance for Arts and Culture Strategy, Policy and Processes

OUTCOME: Council’s planning and decision-making processes for Arts and Culture are transparent and consistent with the Arts and Culture Strategy

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Continue to support Woollahra Council’s Arts and Culture Advisory Committee’s governance structure and leadership in guiding the implementation of the Woollahra Arts and Culture Strategy	2024/25 Ongoing			Council-wide

Goal 5.4: Evaluate and Measure Performance

OUTCOME: Woollahra Council’s investment in Arts and Culture is measured and reported

Action	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsibility
1 Use feedback from evaluation of arts and cultural activities to inform future program development and delivery	2024/25 Ongoing			Community & Culture Woollahra Libraries

The actions in this plan are additional to, build on and complement Woollahra Council’s existing arts and culture initiatives, activities and programs.

A wealth of ideas emerged during the discovery and engagement phases of the Strategy project. Given that achieving arts and cultural outcomes is best

viewed within a 20-50 year horizon and that this is a four year Strategy, actions have been prioritised and those that have not been included in this Strategy have been documented in Appendix C of the Research to Inform the Arts and Culture Strategy Report, for future reference and consideration in subsequent arts and culture strategies and policies.



3 | The Strategic Context

Percival Park art workshop led by Alice McAuliffe, Rose Bay

3.1 | People of Woollahra*



Population
53,496



Median age
41 years

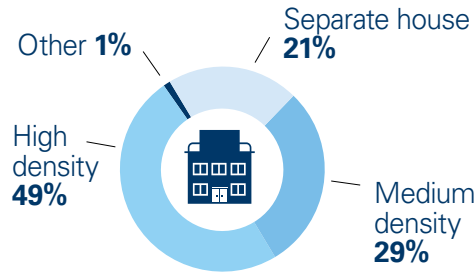


Families with kids
7,142
1.8 kids per family



People per household
2.3

Housing type



**78% of dwellings are medium or high density



Born Overseas
34.2%



Speak English at home
84.5%



Australian citizen
84.9%



Labour force participation
64.1%

Of these 62.4% were employed full time, 26.6% were employed part-time and 3.3% were unemployed.



University qualified residents
55.2%



Lone people in households
6,949 ↑ **10.6%** since 2016



Total Households
22,897 ↓ **2.1%** since 2016

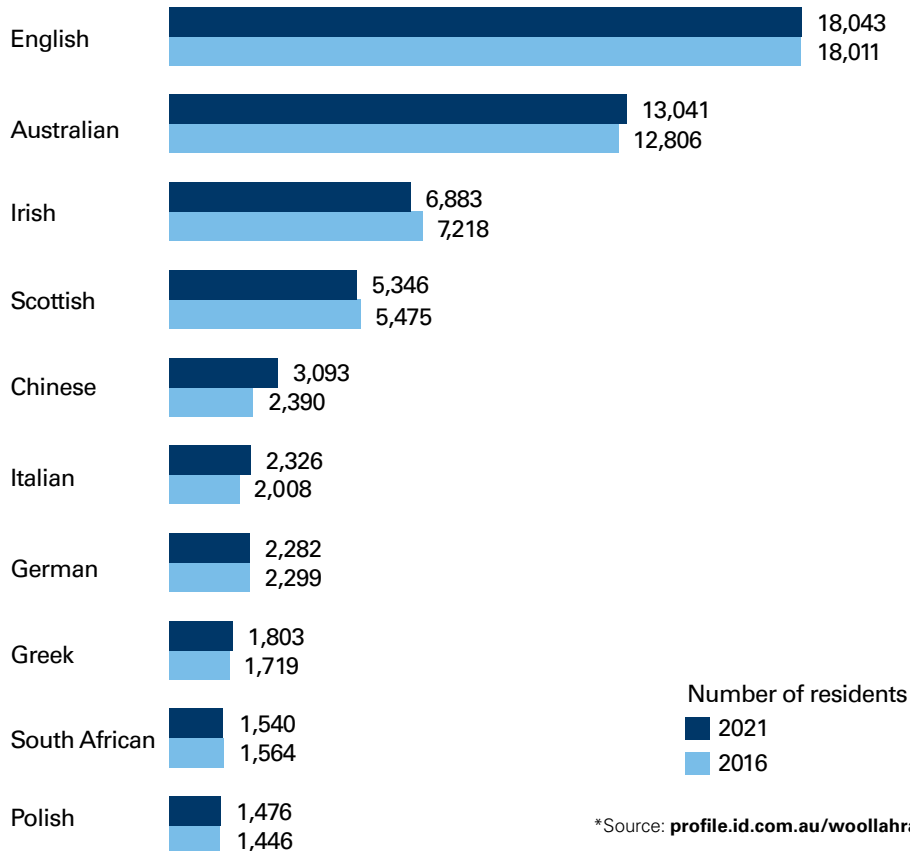
*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census
abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA18500

**id.community demographic resources
profile.id.com.au/woollahra/dwellings

3.1 | People of Woollahra

Top 10 Ancestries (2016-2021)

In 2021, the top 5 ancestries of people living in the Woollahra Municipality were English, Australian, Irish, Scottish and Chinese. The top two ancestry growth rates in the LGA were Chinese (number of people increased by 29.41% since 2016) and Italian (number of people increased by 15.84% since 2016).



*Source: profile.id.com.au/woollahra/ancestry

According to the ABS, during 2021-22, one third (32%) of Australian adults participated in at least one cultural activity, a slight increase from 31% in 2017-18. Women were more likely to participate (39%) than men (25%) and people aged 15-24 years were more likely to participate (41%) than any other age group.

The most popular cultural activity cited was a visit to the cinema (44% of adults), while craft and visual arts activities were the activities that people were next most likely to pursue.

Australian cultural and creative industries attracted \$160 billion in 2020-21, the most recent year for which data was available. In the comparison year, 2017-18, these industries attracted an estimated \$141 billion, indicating 13% growth. Not-for-profit organisations in these industries attracted \$1.2 billion in 2019-20, while the majority of income was derived from sales and services.

The 2021 Census indicates that, with a little under a 10% increase, Arts and Recreation (which includes both arts and culture and fitness, gaming and other recreation sectors) recorded the highest growth as the industry of employment for residents of Woollahra between 2016 and 2021. A little under 700 people reported that they worked in this sector at the 2021 Census.

3.2 | The Policy Context

While the most significant policy context for arts and culture within Woollahra is that created by Council's Community Strategic Plan and other planning and policy documents, the Woollahra cultural ecosystem sits with broader ecosystems at regional, state and national levels. The strategic frameworks of NSW and Commonwealth governments establish a normative context for arts and culture planning and therefore played a role in developing the Woollahra Arts and Culture Strategy.

A benchmarking exercise was completed, to determine trends and best practice in local government arts and culture planning and services provided data to support a comparative analysis of planning across the sector, contributing data to identify key focus areas for design and investment. Key findings relating to the development of the Strategy have been documented in a report that documents the research undertaken to inform the Arts and Culture Strategy, that should be read in conjunction with this Strategy.

Table 4.4 in the report documenting the research undertaken in preparing the Strategy (see Appendix A, page 38) demonstrates the consistency of the key focus areas (KFAs) of the Woollahra Arts and Culture Strategy with state, national and other local government policy and strategy.



German Cultural Day,
Goethe Institute, 2024.
Proudly supported by Woollahra Council

3.3 | What we currently do



One Bright Pearl by Lindy Lee,
Blackburn Gardens, Double Bay

Our Arts and Culture infrastructure

Council is the custodian of an extensive portfolio of community infrastructure, with 14 'community' venues across the Woollahra LGA. Some of this infrastructure (4 assets in total), like the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf, is designated for arts and cultural purposes. Other community infrastructure is not arts and culture-specific, but it is frequently used by the community for creative purposes.

Council's provision is complemented by a wide variety of community and cultural infrastructure that is in private or commercial ownership. For example, the research identified 22 commercial art galleries, 20 local schools (both independent and public) and 10 places of worship within the LGA that may have the potential to complement Council's provision. This broad lens has been applied when considering the overall availability of and access to cultural infrastructure within Woollahra and has resulted in actions within the Strategy aimed at developing broader understanding of and dialogue with these assets.

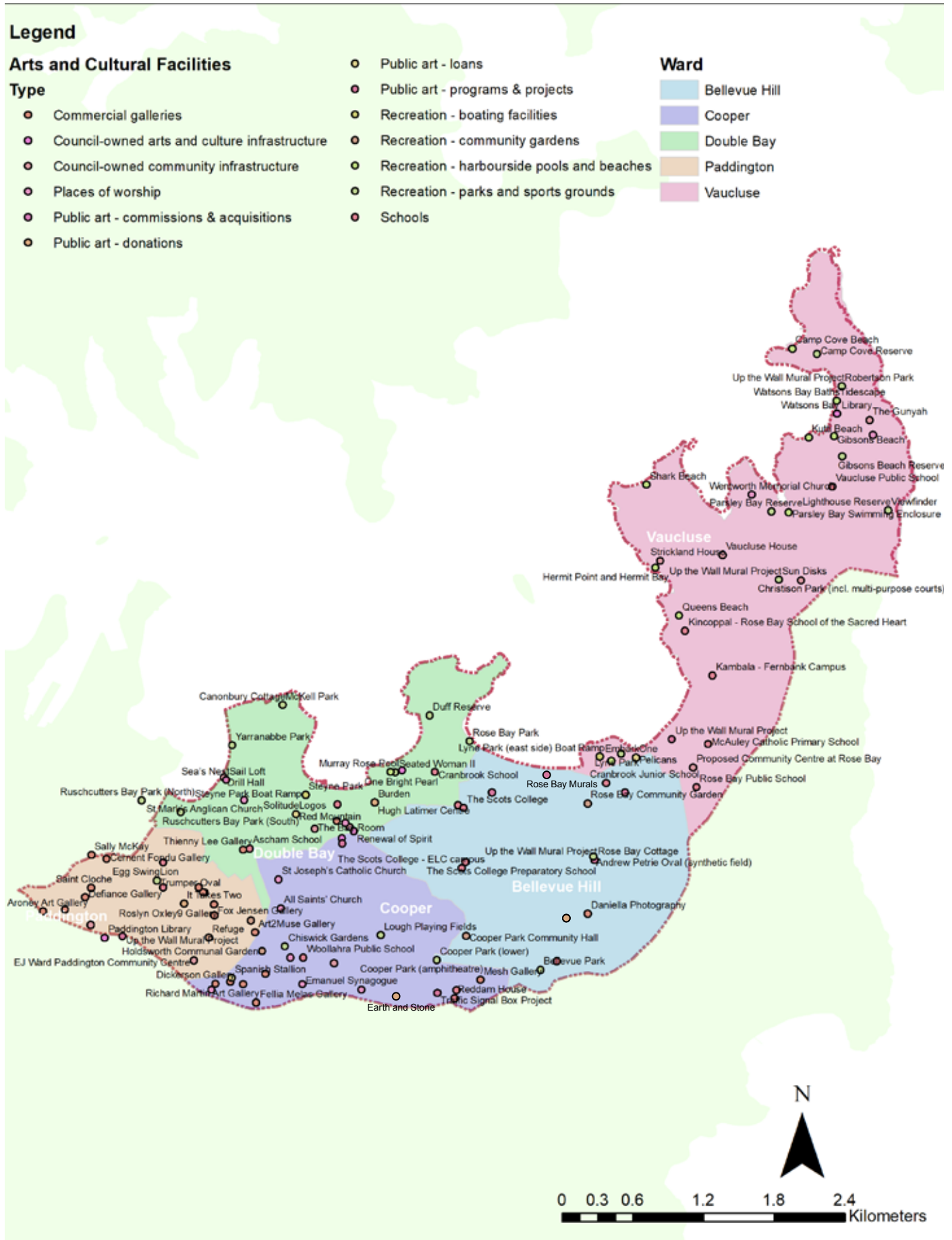
A key finding of the research underpinning the strategy is that, when the broad lens of community/cultural infrastructure is applied, there is adequate provision in terms of area, condition and distribution. However the Strategy includes actions to consider functionality, fitness for purpose and opportunities to increase utilisation of some assets via audit and strategic planning for their future, within the parameters of what can be achieved with those assets within the portfolio that have heritage value.

A listing of all Council-owned cultural and community facilities is provided in the Research to Inform the Arts and Culture Strategy report in the Appendix from Section 6, page 55.

The map below shows the provision and distribution of both Council-owned community, cultural and open-space assets and those held in private hands, on a 'whole of Woollahra LGA' basis.

3.3 | What we currently do

Arts and Cultural Facilities





3.3 | What we currently do

Woollahra’s Community and Cultural Infrastructure – Overview

Infrastructure Type	Number of Assets / Sites
Council cultural venues	4
Council community venues *	14
Public art - commissioned	9
Public art - donated	12
Public art – programs and projects	7
Commercial art galleries	22
Independent Schools	14
Government Schools	6
Places of Worship	10

* Proposed, a new centre located at Rose Bay is in development.

Performing at Senior’s Week – Festival of Fun New Experiences, Redleaf.

3.3 | What we currently do

Our Public Art

Council has had a long-term commitment to placemaking and to engaging the community in creative life through the medium of public art. Woollahra's extensive public art collection is comprised of more than 25 pieces. These artworks have been purchased or commissioned by Woollahra Council, donated by artists or their families or are on long-term loan. This is an innovative and flexible approach to maintaining a public art collection, that maximises the contribution of the many creatives residents in Woollahra.

These public art assets promote public access and play. Celebrate Woollahra's unique 'place' and character and help to preserve, emphasise and enhance the local identity of Woollahra and its people.

A listing of all of Council's public artworks is provided in the Research to Inform the Arts and Culture Strategy, at Appendix.



Wilberforce Carpark mural by Claire Loxton. Part of *Streets as Shared Spaces*, Rose Bay
Library Book return artwork by Ignacio Querejeta.

Our arts and culture programs and events

Woollahra Council delivers a wide variety of programs and initiatives in the arts and cultural space. These include activities such as the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize and Digital Literary Award; schemes and policies such as the Woollahra Plaque Scheme and Woollahra Creative Hoardings Policy; and cultural and creative programs such as

those delivered at the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf and at Council's three libraries at Double Bay, Watsons Bay and Paddington.

Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize

The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize celebrates and explores the full potential of the small sculpture art format. This prestigious award supports and promotes diverse, original, freestanding and wall-

3.3 | What we currently do



Mulga Vista by Sinéad Hanley,
Woollahra Creative Hoardings Program



Inala After the Rain exhibition opening,
Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf

mounted sculptures in a variety of mediums, measuring up to 80cm in any dimension. Over its 23-year history, the prize has featured some of the world's most exciting contemporary sculptures and continues to promote and celebrate artistic excellence, with the finalists exhibited at Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf each year.

Woollahra Digital Literary Award

The Woollahra Digital Literary Award recognises the best new contemporary literature in Australia, highlighting innovation and creativity. Inaugurated in 2017, it is inclusive of all forms of literature, including poetry, fiction and non-fiction works, as well as multimedia and hybrid works that were first published in a digital format. Each year well-known authors and critics from the literary community select a shortlist of winners, who are celebrated at an Awards Night at Woollahra Library at Double Bay.

Youth Photographic Award and Short Film Prize

This annual competition, founded in 1994, is open to high school students who live, or attend school, in the Woollahra Local Government Area. The competition enables emerging photographers and filmmakers and opportunity to practice and value

their craft and provides an opportunity for them to share their creativity, innovation and imagination with their local community. All entries are exhibited at Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf each year.

Woollahra Council Plaques Scheme

The Woollahra Council Plaques Scheme honours exceptional people or events associated with the Woollahra local government area that have made a significant impact on life in the area or Australia as a nation. Four plaques are added to the scheme each year, following a call for nominations from the local community. There are currently 43 plaques distributed across Woollahra that can be found using a map and suburb directory on Council's website.

Woollahra Creative Hoardings Program

Council seeks to increase public art and provide opportunities for artists and designers to create works for display in the public domain by requiring artwork on all construction site hoardings. This policy's objective is to contribute to the visual amenity of the public domain and streetscape during the construction phase of developments, through artwork, historic images and/or designs promoting sustainability and biodiversity.

3.3 | What we currently do

Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf

Opened in November 2021, aside from providing a physical, exhibition space, the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf delivers a variety of programs and events to engage with the local community, aside from visitation to experience visual arts. This includes artist talks, creative workshops, poetry readings and musical performances.

The Gallery has also initiated an Artist in Residence program, which, through an annual expressions of interest process, enables artists access to one of two free studio spaces, for a time limited period, to develop and share their practice. Artist commit to a community project as part of their tenure.

The Gallery's exhibition model is also based on an expression of interest process, to establish an annual schedule of artist-exhibitors, who pay for the exhibition space and who have an opportunity to make sales during their tenure. The Gallery does not have a permanent collection.



Ham Darroch installation view, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf.



Author Vanessa Berry with Digital Literary Award Winners.

Woollahra Libraries – Double Bay, Watsons Bay and Paddington

Across its three libraries at Double Bay, Watsons Bay and Paddington, Council offers a “state of the art” library service that connects people and ideas. The Libraries offers diverse and relevant physical and digital collections and provides a range of children’s services, youth services, a home library service, lifelong learning activities, technology help, and various cultural programs and events.

These include:

- Early literacy programs
- Writer development workshops and events.
- Talks, including authors, ideas, culture, heritage and historical themes
- Business and creative workshops.
- Local history programs – capturing and sharing local stories, images and artefacts; delivering projects to connect people to local stories; local history walks.

3.3 | What we currently do

Grants Programs

Council manages several, annual grants programs, to support innovative, local programs and events to respond to local needs. Grants are designed around a transparent application and allocations process and aim to encourage the development and delivery of activities that will benefit people living, working and /or studying in the Woollahra Municipality.



All Stars performing at the Hot Jazz Picnic, a Grant recipient.

Grants of relevance to the arts, culture and creativity are the Community and Cultural Grants scheme and the Placemaking Grants scheme, while particular aspects of arts and culture strategy (such as fostering a 'food' culture and evening activation) may have relevance to the Business Sector Support grants program.

Council is implementing a new Outgoing Sponsorship program from 2024.

Local Walks and Trails

Although not defined as 'arts and culture' programs, Woollahra Council delivers a number of local walks and trails, with online maps to enable residents and visitors to take a 'do it yourself' tour of sites of significant interest. This includes art and culture walks of: Double Bay, Paddington, Rose Bay, Watsons Bay and Woollahra; as well as Bush Tucker walks produced in partnership with Bush Tukka Dreaming, a First Nations enterprise which are currently on hold due to development works at Nielsen Park.



Cooper Park walk

3.4 | What the community told us about arts and culture in Woollahra



Families enjoying Maisie the Mouse at Woollahra Libraries Spark in the park event.

The community was asked about their needs, expectations, priorities and aspirations for arts and culture via an online community survey, workshops and one-to-one interviews. A detailed discussion of the engagement process and findings is documented in the Research to Inform the Arts and Culture Strategy that informed this Strategy.

The online survey was 'live' between April and May 2024 and attracted 74 responses. The key themes and ideas that emerged were as follows:

- There is strong agreement that arts and culture are important parts of Woollahra's identity
- Most respondents engage with arts and culture between at least once annually, with a majority engaging through exhibitions or visual art
- As well as accessing arts and cultural experiences within Woollahra LGA, a significant proportion of respondents also participates in the arts within Sydney CBD (96.82% at least 'sometimes'), greater Sydney (85.71% at least 'sometimes') and neighbouring local government areas (particularly Waverley LGA, where 73% of people participate at least 'sometimes')
- Survey respondents suggested that they get involved in arts and culture to express themselves creatively; for entertainment; to meet new people
- Respondents believe there is room for improvement in Woollahra Council's investment in and support for arts and culture and while most were positive about their experiences, those who engaged as volunteers or sponsors recorded lower levels of satisfaction with their experience
- Lack of information about what is happening and lack of suitable venues were identified as major barriers to participation in creative life
- Respondents expressed a desire for more provision of just about everything, although exhibitions and programs, public art, events celebrating diverse cultures and festivals such as Seniors Week, were perceived as 'about right' in terms of level of service
- Respondents expressed strong support for activation of public spaces
- Respondents expressed strong support for being able to use council facilities to practice and deliver arts and cultural activities
- Respondents were keen to see more Council grants programs to enable them to deliver arts and cultural activities to their community

3.4 | What the community told us about arts and culture in Woollahra

- Respondents said they'd like 'more' live music, celebration of local architecture and design, exhibition spaces, festivals and community events
- Respondents said they thought that the level of markets and fairs, promotion of recent heritage, amount of visual arts were 'about right'
- Respondents suggested that they'd like to see 'less' of digital cultural programs

Engagement via focus groups, workshops and interviews was conducted between April and May 2024, with 59 stakeholders. The key themes and ideas that emerged were as follows:

First Nations art, culture and heritage:

- Respondents across several of the Focus Groups suggested the importance of increasing representation of First Nations people and culture and this was clearly flagged in the consultation report from the Gujaga Foundation (see Appendix to the Research to Inform the Arts and Culture Strategy). This included recognition of country, telling of First Nations stories, connecting with Elders, connecting language to country, recognising key sites, truth-telling and acknowledging language groups



First Nations artists in conversation, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf

Celebrate Woollahra's unique culture and character:

- Evolve Public Art programs – celebrate local stories – see the history around us – create digital opportunities
- Drive events and programs that celebrate Woollahra's diverse community
- Celebrate Woollahra's network of amazing organisations and individuals
- Reflect local history and culture – engage with local ideas
- Celebrate Woollahra's heritage – make visible and accessible
- Promote Woollahra's iconic and unique events (Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Digital Literary Award) statewide

3.4 | What the community told us about arts and culture in Woollahra

Enhance and facilitate participation in arts and cultural life:

- Increase 'grassroots' participation – 'democratise' arts and culture - make arts and cultural experiences available to the community in the places they go to regularly and in 'surprising' places, from libraries, to local parks, to local hotels. The aim is to encourage participation beyond established / identified audiences
- Deliver programs, exhibitions and events that are fun, create connection but also change views/ behaviours – eg: tree planting event for World Environment Day
- Increase Participation of Young People in arts and cultural life
- Recognise the value of arts and culture to wellbeing, identity and cohesion

Enhance Services

- Enhance openings and build programming at Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf – ensure consistency of program direction and strategy
- Review the Gallery model and exhibition policy so that the model reflects best practice, is contemporary and reflects ethical principles in relation to engagement with artists
- Enhance communications about arts and cultural events and programs – develop and fund a strategic approach that is built on an understanding of how people in Woollahra find out about arts and culture and what motivates them to participate
- Increase the visibility and impact of the arts and culture offer. This doesn't mean doing more, but doing things in a concentrated way and doing them well. It may be a case of doing just 1-2 things that are innovative and catch people's imagination and interest



Young at Art Holdsworth and Woollahra Dementia Alliance workshop, Cultural Hub, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf.



The Green Hand Band, performing at Council's NAIDOC Community Open Day 2024.

3.4 | What the community told us about arts and culture in Woollahra

Support arts and culture through 'hard' cultural infrastructure and open space:

- Make it easier and more viable for community groups, creatives, etc to access and hire community spaces for practice, rehearsal, performances and exhibitions
- Provide venues/spaces for community members / businesses to deliver programs to the community
- Improve affordability and physical access
- Deliver more outdoor performances, exhibitions, arts and cultural events
- Explore opportunities for placemaking as part of works for priority areas – parks, roads, traffic – eg: placemaking in commercial centres, use roads creatively – eg: street closures for pop up events, markets
- Streamline DA processes to encourage creativity and support artists in public space utilisation
- Identify opportunities to repurpose existing community spaces for cultural and creative activities – activate and increase utilisations
- Plan new community spaces and venues so they can be used for multiple purposes, including arts and cultural activities



Senior's Week – Festival of Fun New Experiences, Redleaf

- Support artist-run initiatives – ask people to come forward with a proposal for what they could do in an artist-run space – could be a collective initiative – may include the development of a public art trail, local walks to experience heritage, etc

Build a cultural ecosystem – leverage opportunities

- Tap into events and festivals happening in greater Sydney / adjacent suburbs
- Build relationships with other councils and arts and cultural institutions - complement what they offer and make Woollahra's offer things that are unique and different

- Improve grants processes – get more diverse groups to apply – make it easier, give support – eg: Grant Applicants' Info. Sessions before grants open; Q&As on website, etc.
- Foster relationships with industry groups, other levels of government, business and commercial enterprises, neighbouring local councils – leverage relationships for collaborative/non-duplication of services and programs; sponsorship and grants
- Explore opportunities for Sponsorship and Philanthropy
- Support local creatives to apply for / win Commonwealth and State grants

3.4 | What the community told us about arts and culture in Woollahra



Ursula Yovich performing
at NAIDOC Week 2023

Sustainability and Resilience

- Evaluate and measure performance – demonstrate Impact
- Review staffing and resourcing of arts and culture within Woollahra Council
- Maintain good governance for arts and culture policy and processes
- Develop the A&C Strategy within context of a 50 year future - hold space for blue sky thinking – consider how demographics will change – consider the cultural legacy we want to create

A discrete process for consultation with the First Nations community was included in the project methodology. The Gujaga Foundation was contracted to consult their local community (at La Perouse) on behalf of Woollahra Council and to provide a short report that outlined key strengths and opportunities for the strategy to address. These included recommendations that Woollahra Council should: do more to highlight the unique First Nations history of the area; work with the First Nations community around cultural development programs, by making space/ venues available for cultural programs such as artefact making, cultural dancing, fundraising events to support language and culture

revitalisation; and advocate with other government stakeholders in the area to ensure First Nations stories are told consistently and collaboratively.

Interviews with First Nations cultural practitioners indicated a desire for Council to better consider and support local First Nations artists in grants and expressions of interest processes and the impacts of the current gallery exhibition model on emerging artists. They also noted the importance of non-Indigenous organisations showing their value for First Nations arts and culture (not expecting people to work ‘for free’) and the difficulties for First Nations artists in navigating the structures, policies and regulatory aspects of local government administration. A final, significant comment related to the importance of Woollahra Council building relationships with local creatives and an ongoing program that celebrates First Nations culture – “not just NAIDOC Week”.

The data gathered and analysed from the community engagement phase of the project was highly consistent with the findings from the literature review and benchmarking exercises that occurred during the ‘Discovery’ phase of the

3.4 | What the community told us about arts and culture in Woollahra

project. Key themes, around engaging with First Nations people, recognising and championing what is unique about Woollahra, increasing accessibility, affordability, inclusion and celebration of diversity were reflected, as were expectations around Council's role as an enabler of creativity, rather than as, implicitly, the deliver of arts and cultural services.

A key concept expressed in the literature, that was also strongly expressed, although in different terminologies, was that of the creative ecosystem and Council's role, along with other levels of government in fostering relationships, leveraging assets, providing grants and encouraging collaboration to develop a flourishing ecosystem. This included pursuing opportunities for partnerships, sponsorship and philanthropical contributions to local arts and cultural assets and activities.

The opportunities provided for creatives to make better use of Council's numerous assets – some of which are identified 'cultural' infrastructure and others of which are described as 'community' spaces and the benefit to Council and community of seeing these assets activated (and in turn activating local areas) was another important theme to emerge in both the literature and via community consultation.

One area of current and future development in the arts and culture sector that is identified through the literature, was identified by Councillors, but provoked little attention or discussion from the community was the area of digital arts, film and screen, including the need to enhance the skills of arts practitioners for a digital future. While this theme is acknowledged, the limited interest from the community meant that this is not included in the strategy, however it will be collated into the list of ideas for future reference of Woollahra



Children doing craft at Woollahra Libraries Spark Truck event at Cooper Park.

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