**Frequently asked questions about the creative strategy**

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|  | QUESTION | RESPONSE |
|  | Why is the City of Melbourne developing a creative strategy? | Melburnians have long been proud of their city’s reputation as a creative city. This was confirmed, once again, through extensive community engagement and a citizen’s jury that resulted in the latest Future Melbourne Community Plan. The expiry of our Arts Strategy 2014–17 provided an opportunity to take a fresh strategic look at creativity through the lens of the latest Future Melbourne, bearing in mind the forces shaping Melbourne, international trends and competitive city positioning. |
|  | What does the strategy say? | The strategy contends that creative people are central to helping Melbourne be the very best city that it can be for everybody. It proposes that Melbourne works with creative people of all kinds on city challenges or opportunities that relate to the nine goals Melburnians have set for their city through the Future Melbourne Community Plan. We will engage multi-disciplinary teams of creative practitioners and subject experts and ask them: if Melbourne were the world’s most creative city, how could creative thinking deliver an extraordinary result in relation to this challenge or opportunity? By repeatedly issuing this provocation, we intend to generate compelling new thinking on city issues, which will result in a better city for everyone. |
|  | Why change from an arts strategy to a creative strategy? | The new strategy draws on the full potential of Melbourne’s extraordinary creative community to benefit all who live, work and visit here. This creative community certainly includes what might traditionally be called the ‘arts sector’ but also encapsulates fields such as architecture, design and gaming. Creativity is an expert behaviour, with its practice taking many forms. From Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other First Nations people, as well as those who study ancient civilizations, we know creative people of all persuasions have always helped others understand and draw meaning from the world around them. |
|  | How is the creative strategy different to the expired arts strategy? | Strategies look at where we’ve been, where we are now and where we could and should be. Our draft creative strategy could not exist in its current form without the strong foundations built as a result of the 2014–17 Arts Strategy: Australia’s first cultural infrastructure plan, robust funding mechanisms for creative people and organisations, programs that value and interpret cultural heritage and more. These are enshrined now in the way we operate. However there were two points from the old strategy we believe were realised at only a fraction of their true potential: recognising and valuing the contribution creative people make to our city and forging connections between creatives and others. We believe it is these two elements that have the transformative ability to take Melbourne to a new place in relation to creativity, for the benefit of all who live, visit and work here, including creative practitioners themselves. |
|  | What research took place to underpin the strategy? | There are a plethora of recent studies that look deeply at the demographic and economic context of Melbourne, including those commissioned recently by Creative Victoria. The City of Melbourne commissions its own research, including for the development of the latest 10-year Future Melbourne Community Plan, four-year Council Plan and a review of its many expiring strategies and plans. We revisited all of them in depth, including the 400-odd pieces of feedback that contributed to our Creative City goal. We collected and read creative strategies from New York, London, Berlin, Adelaide, Sydney, Boston, Portland, Singapore, Tokyo, Paris, Montreal and many more. We also took another close look at our expired Art Strategy. We found most cities aspired to similar things: a more equitable city, greater diversity, an expression of their city’s unique identity, provision of infrastructure and funding. What we realised was that these aspirations were either already outlined in depth in Future Melbourne and our Council Plan, along with clear objectives, priorities and measures, or they were part of our business as usual – developing and managing creative spaces, funding creative people and projects and so on. We had a choice. We could add to the already significant body of research available, repeat ourselves and cherry pick from what the community has already told us, discarding bits along the way. Alternatively we could forge a bold new path, integrating creative practice into everything our community holds dear, creating dynamic new connections and expanding our ambitions for creativity so that it applied to a much bigger canvas. |
|  | Why does the strategy not address major public infrastructure proposed for the arts, such as the Southbank precinct and NGV Contemporary. | This strategy is not about crystal ball gazing and compiling lists of actions that could be out of date before the ink is dry. It is not the place where we draw lines on contested issues that require robust debate in public forums. Instead the strategy is a commitment to place creative practitioners at the heart of the city’s thinking and it will be a constant, ever-evolving relationship – not a once-every-four-years conversation. The nature of this strategy is that it will incorporate and respond to local context constantly, in real time. Working alongside the strategy, and referenced within it, are a host of tactical plans (existing and in development) that outline how we will continue to nurture creative spaces, support music, attract and distribute funding including philanthropic funds and so on. |
|  | How much will the strategy cost? | Our funding for the arts remains the same, along with its funding mechanisms for independent artists, individual disciplines and organisations. Some development funding will now be used to work with artists and other creative experts on city challenges. The projects that are selected as a result of the ideas generated will directly align with work already occurring across the organisation and be subject to the Council’s long established annual planning and budget processes. |
|  | Will the arts sector lose City of Melbourne funding as a result? | No. We expect funding for the arts sector to grow and diversify as decision makers begin to better understand the value and profound transformations that can be created by involving artists of all kinds at the start of their processes and budget for this from the outset. |
|  | What impact will the strategy have on creative practitioners seeking City of Melbourne funding? | Over time, we expect to be able to give creative practitioners more information about the types of challenges and opportunities facing the city and the opportunities for creative practitioners to work with us on civic-scale projects. By working with cross-disciplinary teams of creative people, we gain fresh thinking on how the city might respond and be in the world. As the strategy’s approach gains traction, we would like to include this information alongside our granting rounds and in our own applications for funding beyond the City of Melbourne. This will allow creative practitioners to pitch their ideas to the places where they are offered profound opportunities and are most likely to attract funding, while still allowing the flexibility to support great stand-alone creative projects. |
|  | Will arts funding now need to be shared among a larger group? | We have always supported a broad range of creative practice. Also, we expect funding for the sector to grow as we involve creative people across all of the work of the Council and demonstrate the value that can be created. |
|  | What consultation occurred on the development of this strategy? | As a starting point we reviewed the extensive consultation that took place as part of the most recent [Future Melbourne](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-melbourne/future-melbourne/Pages/future-melbourne.aspx) refresh. We returned to the hundreds of comments contributed by the people of Melbourne that informed the Creative Melbourne goal. We found most of the suggestions will be covered by our existing programs, with the exception of involving creative people more in the challenges facing the city. We also adopted all nine goals from the community’s Future Melbourne plan as the pillars around which we will select city challenges to work on. We tested our thinking with creative practitioners and Aboriginal leaders and artists. We are now opening our consultation to everyone. Also, the nature of this strategy is that it will remain an open dialogue with the people of Melbourne. |
|  | How does the creative strategy align with the music plan and other plans and policies people have contributed to in the past? | The transformation the creative strategy seeks is for Melbourne to be a far more creative city across the board, in profound qualitative and transformational ways. There will still be specific disciplines where tactical plans or pieces of policy are or have been developed – for example, music, public art, street art and design are areas that, for different reasons, require more internal or external clarity. For this reason the creative strategy provides our high-level vision for creativity generally and outlines how we will go about making the changes we wish to see in the city. A suite of other documents – existing and in development – go into more detail about tactics or policy. These are listed in on Page 5 of the strategy. |
|  | Why did you include the Dusseldorf Metro as a case study? | The Düsseldorf case study was included not because it is a metro system but largely because of the profound cultural statement the cross-disciplinary creative team, working on a city connection project, came up with – that their stations should treat users as citizens rather than consumers by refusing all advertising. This single notion reframes the entire premise of Düsseldorf’s underground network and the city’s cultural, creative, demographic and economic context. Melbourne’s draft creative strategy talks as much about city opportunities as city challenges. The analogy for Melbourne from this case study is the potential impact of early creative practitioner input on defining the identity of a city as experienced by hundreds of thousands of people every day. As we say, “Art at the Start”! |
|  | Why did you use an Auckland art centre as a case study? | The Te Oro case study was not included because it is an arts centre but as an example of a deep decade-long genuine partnership with a First Nations community within a (post-) colonial context, in a way that has not occurred in central Melbourne to date. For instance, there is no English in Te Oro – all signage and naming is in local language. That in itself is a profound creative statement. The culture and artistry of First Nations people was included not as an add-on, decoration, welcome or client requirement but literally woven by community into the fabric of the building. Melbourne, a city facing unprecedented growth, has a goal of being a city with an Aboriginal focus – the analogy Te Oro offers is that it shows what can be accomplished through deep cross-disciplinary collaboration from the outset of a significant project, with all conceptual thinking done as a partnership with an Indigenous community. |
|  | How will you choose the practitioners to work on city challenges? | City of Melbourne officers will start with the challenges and consider the types of creative practice that, in concert, could provide most insight to each project through working collaboratively. From there it’s a matter of considering who is highly experienced, credentialed and regarded in each field and capable of thinking on a civic scale, as well as available when required. We want the creative practitioners involved in working on behalf of our city to be as diverse as Melbourne itself. |
|  | What types of creative practice will be involved in working on the challenges and will the practitioners be paid? | The City of Melbourne will be involving the full spectrum of creative practice to help it implement the strategy. Practitioners will be paid for their contribution, in line with NAVA rates. |
|  | Can I suggest a city challenge? | To begin with, we are not seeking new challenges from the public as we have plenty to go on from what we already know about our city and from the comments we receive in response to our major community engagement processes. However, if people are keen to suggest ideas, we’re happy to collect them and consider them for the strategy’s approach. Contact us via <participatemelbourne.vic.gov.au/creative-strategy> |
|  | How have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people been involved in the development of the strategy? | The City of Melbourne’s arts branch is in the process of significantly increasing the degree of Traditional Owner engagement with our work. The definition of creativity used in the strategy builds on a presentation by, and discussion with, Wiradjuri man Professor Mark McMillian, who is Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor of Indigenous Education and Engagement at RMIT University. Prior to completing this draft to take to stakeholders for feedback we took it to our Public Art Advisory Panel, which has more Aboriginal members than non-Aboriginal members and is co-chaired by Boon Wurrung Elder N’Arwee’t Carolyn Briggs. The panel was extremely supportive of the approach, the Aboriginal caucus especially so. Further engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is planned prior to the final draft. As part of the implementation of the strategy, co-development with Traditional Owners is a leading principle. |
|  | Many cities are concerned they are losing artists to other, cheaper suburbs and towns. How will you measure the impact of the strategy? | We hope that as a result of this strategy, creative people will be drawn to Melbourne as a place where creative practice is valued and respected and practitioners are given opportunities to develop and apply their talents on a grand scale. In relation to measurement, we have and will continue to work closely with external organisations including the Cultural Development Network and academic institutions. |
|  | How can I get involved? | You can have your say on our Creative Strategy at <participatemelbourne.vic.gov.au/creative-strategy> or come along to one of our face-to-face sessions in July. |
|  | You have tackled three challenges so far. Can we see the results and what will happen with them? | We formed three cross-disciplinary teams to tackle challenges related to Melbourne’s proposition in winter, Fishermans Bend and the future of Melbourne’s little streets. The thinking from these processes was temporarily set aside while we completed the draft Creative Strategy and waited for our new Lord Mayor to be sworn in. To date, only short summaries are available until we resume work on them in the coming months. |
|  | What of ‘art for art’s sake’? Are you doing less of that while you tackle city problems? | It’s ‘and/and’ not ‘either/or’. If you adopt a holistic First Nations’ definition of art, there is no such thing as ‘art for art’s sake’: rather, art has a critical role to play in informing how the world is and how to be in it. The case studies we compiled include beautiful, compelling works of art that also engage fundamentally with cities and citizens. Artists have a long history of responding to provocations and much of the work we support already does this. Yes, the strategy embraces provocation and response, but if Melbourne strives to be the world’s most creative city, it follows we are seeking an increase, not a decrease, in artwork that is significant, enduring and of international quality in its own right. |