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Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 respectfully acknowledges the past and present traditional owners and custodians of Mparntwe (Alice Springs area) and surrounding estates Antulye (Undoolya) and Irlpme (Bond Springs) and recognises the Apmereke-artweye and Kwetungurle as the senior custodians with the traditional rights to speak for these regions.

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 commits to working together with the Arrernte people. It recognises the Apmereke-artweye and Kwetungurle and their families’ inherent rights as Indigenous Australians and their relationship to the land and water. The maintenance and growth of Arrernte culture is essential to creating a just and fair society for all.
Introduction

The arts, cultural heritage and creative industries are fundamental to Australia’s identity as a society and nation and increasingly to our success as a national economy. To enhance the cultural and economic vibrancy of Alice Springs, the Alice Springs Town Council was supported by the Northern Territory Government, through Arts NT, to develop an Arts and Cultural Policy and accompanying Arts and Cultural Plan.

In places that have a significant land-based economy, such as the Northern Territory and Western Australia, local governments are prioritising arts and cultural activities as they increase social capital through facilitation of community development outcomes. This is particularly important as families look for places that have a strong sense of community and investors look for places that are safe, stable, innovative and likely to attract skilled labour and aspirational consumers.

Social capital is also tied to the identity of a locality and its associated sense of place.


The Alice Springs Town Council’s overarching vision for Alice Springs is:

A vibrant and growing community that embraces its diverse cultural heritage, its unique identity and living environment

Alice Springs Town Council Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 recognises the value of arts and culture for their significant contribution to a resilient and prosperous community and its central role in the achievement of this vision.

Culture can be recognised as a strategic asset. It is expressed in many ways - through the way we live, speak, conduct public life, relate to others, celebrate, remember the past, entertain ourselves and imagine the future.
Arts and culture is what defines a place and its people. Alice Springs’ vibrant arts, cultural heritage and creative industries are born out of its unique history, including being home to some of the oldest continuing living cultures on earth.

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 supports five out of six goals outlined in the Alice Springs Town Council Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016.

Goal 1: A growing and dynamic economy

Goal 2: A harmonious and healthy community actively engaged in recreation, arts and culture

Goal 3: A town at the forefront of sustainable management & protection of its natural & built environment

Goal 4: A town developed with the desired infrastructure of its residents whilst reflective of its unique character

Goal 5: A community with a perception of high public safety

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 was developed through an extensive process including a two-part consultation process, background research, consideration of industry best practice and an analysis of current trends and challenges.

Engagement with the wider community provided an opportunity for open dialogue with the arts and culture sector, education institutions, local business, local and Territory government agencies, Indigenous organisations and the wider community.

Council is taking a leadership role to create a supportive and productive environment for artists of all backgrounds, working across all art forms, in Alice Springs.

Investment in the arts is investment in a connected, interesting, enjoyable and more liveable Alice Springs.

The Vision as expressed in the Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Policy is:

Arts, cultural heritage and creative industries are highly valued as they make a direct and vital contribution to the prosperity, liveability and creativity of Alice Springs, promoting the cultures and values that make up this diverse region across Australia and the world.

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 supports this Vision and guides Council’s work to promote, support and grow the arts and cultural sector in the municipality of Alice Springs.

The Plan details an expanded breadth of programs to: support the growth and quality of diverse arts and cultural experiences; bring more arts and cultural activities out into the public realm; provide greater exposure to cultural activities; increase opportunities for the involvement of the community; provide an attractor for cultural tourism; and above all, make Alice Springs a more wonderful place to live, work and visit.
Objectives

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 aims to ensure that the arts and cultural sector has the skills, resources and resilience to meet the greater ambition of building a strong and engaged community through the arts.

The Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 - 2021 outlines a framework to acknowledge and support the cultural resources of Alice Springs in order to contribute to a liveable, healthy and safe town.

Six cultural resources were identified during the consultation process. These cultural resources are valuable assets to the Alice Springs community and are considered integral to developing and sustaining a healthy cultural life.

- Landscape
- Indigenous arts and culture
- Heritage and history
- Local stories
- Cultural and linguistic diversity
- Local artists, creatives, arts and cultural events, organisations and groups

Appreciation and connection to place and landscape is an essential and unifying factor in Alice Springs community life. The natural environment has always inspired creativity and connection to place.

Support of creative initiatives and projects that acknowledge, respect and interpret the rich and diverse heritage of the region including local storytelling was identified as central to building community in Alice Springs.

Understanding the importance of Indigenous arts and culture as integral to the identity of the community and region is essential to raising awareness and understanding in order to become a more tolerant community.

Primary importance was given to creative expressions that explored stories of people and place, celebrated history and cultural heritage, including the special role of Anrrrente people as the First People of this region.

Embracing the cultural and linguistic diversity of Alice Springs and forging connections between cultures is a dynamic way to build a more cohesive community.

Creative opportunities and professional development are crucial for the talented people, organisations and enterprises who ensure an innovative and dynamic creative sector and the vitality of Alice Springs.

Extending the reach and impact of existing arts and cultural initiatives that express the town’s unique identity, including broad community participation, is a priority.
The Alice Springs Town Council Arts and Cultural Plan 2016-2021 is framed around five action areas:

1. Places and Spaces
2. Partnerships
3. Promotion and Advocacy
4. Community and Artist Development
5. Access and Participation

Under each area, there are clear objectives and multiple key strategic priorities and corresponding actions. The actions have implementation timelines which have been defined as:
- Short-term (within 12 months)
- Medium term (1-2 years)
- Long-term (3-5 years)
- Ongoing (Continuing)

Wherever possible, Council will work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, education institutions, state and federal governments, other agencies, community groups, historical and heritage organisations and local residents to enhance arts and cultural heritage in Alice Springs.

Council is excited by its achievements to date and by future opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of our community through arts and cultural activities.
OBJECTIVE
Cultivate a sense of place by activating public, non-traditional and open spaces with works that respond to and express the character of Alice Springs, building community connection through the creation of accessible, functional and lively locations that enhance the town’s uniqueness.

CONTEXT
Activating spaces with arts and cultural activities and public art creates opportunities to enrich experience and connection to place and provides a platform for sharing local stories. Art and cultural activities can be presented in formal cultural facilities, in the streets, in the parks, in empty shops or in the natural environs. Art and cultural activities and presentations in public spaces positively influence how people feel about where they live.

Public art plays a valuable role in enhancing everyday experience and adding elements of surprise into our built and natural environments. Whether it is a sculpture, impromptu performance or temporary art installation, situating art in everyday life fosters new and meaningful connections between people and places.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
1.1 Support art and cultural activities that express local identity and respond to the natural environment and cultural heritage of Alice Springs and the region.
1.2 Increase awareness of, knowledge of and engagement with public art.
1.3 Encourage arts and cultural activity to take place in the built and natural environment throughout the municipal area.
1.4 Encourage the use of community facilities for arts and cultural purposes.
1.5 Enhance the cultural vibrancy of the Central Business District by supporting vibrant arts and cultural activities to take place in the precinct’s public and non-traditional spaces.
STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.1 Increase the skills and knowledge of Council’s Public Art Advisory Committee in planning, commissioning and implementation. (Ongoing)

1.2 Continue to assist individual artists and arts and cultural organisations to: comply with relevant Council regulations, permits; obtain Council approvals and permits; access Council facilities and public and open spaces. (Ongoing)

1.3 The formation of a Public Art Master Plan through which cultural significance and heritage values are expressed. (Short-term)

1.4 Create an Alice Springs Public Art Register. (Short-term)

1.5 Create a Public Art Interpretation Plan. (Short-term)

1.6 Create an accessible and activated hub of activity for social interaction, arts and cultural activity in the Central Business District through the creation of a Pop-Up Program of live music, visual art exhibitions, installations, live comedy, circus etc, using identified buildings either in transition, empty or under-utilised. (Initiate in Short-term - action is ongoing)

1.7 Promote the Alice Springs Public Art Register through the following platforms:

Digital
i. Promotion of the Register of Public Art in Alice Springs on the Alice Springs Town Council website. (Short-term)

ii. The creation of an online map that showcases the public art in Alice Springs and outlines a public art trail that is downloadable and has an accessible format. (Short-term)

iii. The creation of a digital application available on smart phones that showcases the public art in Alice Springs with a map and hosts interpretations alongside. (Medium-term)

Print
iv. The creation of a printed publication that outlines the Alice Springs Town Council permanent public art collection. (Medium-term)

Onsite
v. The creation and installation of signage infrastructure for every artwork in the Alice Springs Public Art Register. (Medium-term)

1.8 Create a temporary and ephemeral public art program that celebrates Alice Springs’ natural environment and cultural heritage, supports arts and cultural activity to be more visible in public and open spaces throughout the municipal area and allows for greater engagement with the wider community. (Medium to Long-term)

1.9 Investigate the viability and development of an outdoor multi-purpose space that can host multiple events and activities such as music performances, exhibitions, film festivals, dance, theatre, workshops etc. (Medium to Long-term)

Please note the following explanations:

The Public Art Collection of Alice Springs
The Alice Springs Town Council owns a collection of public art that will be documented in the Alice Springs Public Art Register. The Alice Springs Town Council manages and conserves this collection.

The Alice Springs Town Council Art Collection
The Alice Springs Town Council owns a collection of art that has been acquired and gifted to the Council by the Alice Springs Art Foundation and Central Australian Art Society as part of their national acquisitive art awards. These works are part of the nationally significant Araluen Art Collection and are preserved by the Araluen Arts Centre. They are publicly displayed in various exhibitions at the Araluen Arts Centre.
OBJECTIVE
Foster relationships, establish strategic alliances and collaborate with Alice Springs arts and cultural networks, all tiers of government and the private and public sectors to support a vibrant and diverse arts and cultural environment.

CONTEXT
Council alone cannot achieve the vision for the Alice Springs arts and cultural community. The successful development of arts and cultural strategies and initiatives requires strong partnerships across Council, government and the wider community. Partnering often enables the delivery of projects of a scale or complexity that could not be delivered independently.

Opportunities exist to build on existing partnerships and develop new ones where strategic interests, skills and priorities align, towards the planning and delivery of arts and cultural activities in a supportive and productive environment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2.1 Build partnerships with external local, territory, state and federal agencies and peak bodies to advocate for and secure in-kind and financial support for projects that deliver shared objectives.

2.2 Increase collaboration, skill sharing and resource efficiencies across Council in the planning, programming and implementation of arts and cultural initiatives.

2.3 Improve collaboration and skill sharing with external stakeholders in the planning, programming and implementation of arts and cultural initiatives.

2.4 Raise awareness about the reach, impact and value of Alice Springs and the region’s unique arts and cultural experiences to external local, territory, state and federal agencies and peak bodies.
STRATEGIC ACTIONS

2.1 Develop partnerships with local organisations to support the delivery of Indigenous-specific outcomes in public spaces. (Initiate in Short-term - action is ongoing)

2.2 Partner with the arts, business and tourism sectors to promote the range and quality of arts and cultural activities available to enhance Central Australia’s competitiveness as a global destination and an appealing place to live and work. (Initiate in Short-term - action is ongoing)

2.3 Initiate meetings across Council departments to assist in the planning, programming and implementation of arts and cultural initiatives. (Initiate in Short-term - action is ongoing)

2.4 Initiate dialogue with relevant agencies in the Northern Territory Government such as Major Events, Arts NT and Tourism NT to explore the community’s existing strengths and how the region’s unique arts and cultural experiences can be strengthened through better communications and working relationships. (Initiate in Short-term - action is ongoing)

2.5 Strengthen existing strategic relationships across arts and culture, education, health, tourism, community and local enterprise. (Medium to Long-term)

2.6 Develop mentoring partnerships with local arts and cultural organisations with strategic support over 3 years. The support will be tailored to ensure a sustainable partnership that strengthens collaboration and skill sharing in the planning, programming and implementation of arts and cultural initiatives. (Long-term)

2.7 Seek funding from external local, territory, state and federal agencies and peak bodies. (Medium to Long-term)
OBJECTIVE
The cultural vibrancy of Alice Springs is widely promoted and experienced as a key feature of the town’s identity.

CONTEXT
This objective builds upon Alice Springs’ well-deserved reputation for excellence in arts and cultural experiences. Developing a greater awareness of Alice Springs’ creative strengths and artistic excellence will strengthen existing networks and facilitate new connections and potential investment within the region and beyond.

Whilst Alice Springs is generally a well-connected place, it cannot be assumed that the cultural sector has strong and effective communication and information-sharing networks. By its very nature, the sector is made up of organisations and individual practitioners working somewhat in isolation and in competition for limited resources and a relatively small core audience.

The Council has an essential role in enabling the arts to flourish and supporting broad community access to arts and cultural experiences. Advocacy and research will enable Council and the sector to develop effective strategies to address issues and harness opportunities in a timely way.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

3.1 Publicly acknowledge and promote the contributions of artists and the cultural sector to Alice Springs.

3.2 Develop and implement accessible and sustainable promotions that make it easier for all residents and visitors to access accurate information about Alice Springs’ arts and cultural events.

3.3 Identify publicity and marketing opportunities to better promote and cross-promote arts and cultural activities in Alice Springs and across the region.

3.4 Develop partnerships to support research that assesses the impact of arts and culture on Alice Springs and the region and what resources and infrastructure would assist artists to build financially sustainable careers and creative practices to strengthen the local economy.
STRATEGIC ACTIONS

3.1 Host quarterly meetings with arts, business and tourism representatives. (Initiate in Short-term - action is ongoing)

3.2 Conduct an audit of existing arts and cultural organisations, events and facilities. Create a public register of arts and cultural organisations as a mapping of the arts and cultural sector. (Short-term)

3.3 Develop and implement a marketing plan that ensures accessible and sustainable promotions of arts and cultural activities to the wider community and the region.

   Potential concepts include:

   Digital
   i. Promotion of the Alice Springs Arts and Culture Calendar on the Alice Springs Town Council website. (Ongoing)
   ii. Celebrate Council’s cultural investments by writing stories on Council-funded arts and cultural initiatives for Council’s social media platforms. (Medium-term)
   iii. The creation of an Alice Springs Arts and Culture Information Guide that lists all of the arts and cultural organisations and contact details which is downloadable and accessible. (Medium to Long-term)

   Print
   iv. Printed copies of an Alice Springs Arts and Culture Information Guide for distribution to the wider community and in ‘welcome packs’ to new residents. (Medium to Long-term)
   v. Promotion of the Alice Springs Arts and Cultural Calendar and Information Guide in the printed Alice Springs Town Council annual calendar. (Short-term)

   Onsite
   vi. Promotion of selected arts and cultural events through hosting exhibitions in the foyer. (Short-term)
   vii. Wearing promotional material, such as beanies to promote the Beanie Festival, T-shirts etc. (Short-term)
   viii. Work in partnership with Red Hot Arts Central Australia to expand the reach of its Arts E-Bulletin service to a greater and more diverse audience. (Short-term)

3.4 Undertake research to gain a greater understanding of: the economic and social contributions that the arts and cultural sector makes to Alice Springs; the barriers faced by artists and producers and the barriers preventing broad and diverse participation across the community in arts and cultural activities. (Long-term)
OBJECTIVE
Support professional development, enable community arts and increase community engagement and participation.

CONTEXT
Access to creative opportunities and professional development are crucial to the support and encouragement of the talented people, organisations and enterprises that determine the vitality of Alice Springs.

Council is committed to engaging and supporting artists and producers and providing opportunities for the whole community to access arts and cultural activities. Where possible, Council will enable the development of pathways to aid professional development and move toward sustainable artistic and creative practice.

Opportunities for skills development, knowledge sharing, attracting broad funding mixes and diverse participation all contribute to the establishment of a creative, dynamic community.

Collaborations between artists, arts and cultural organisations, stakeholders, business, tourism and the public contribute to creative development.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
4.1 Create and support practical opportunities to build professional networks that assist the development and growth of the cultural sector, including socially disadvantaged and marginalised people in the community.

4.2 Strengthen existing events and projects that contribute significantly to making Alice Springs an inclusive, culturally rich, vibrant and safe community.

4.3 Continue to assist individual artists and arts and cultural organisations to comply with relevant Council regulations.

4.4 Support a diversity of artists and creative practitioners across all career stages and art forms to reflect the town’s unique character.

4.5 Seek funding to enable the development of professional and skills development to enable a range of artists and groups.
STRATEGIC ACTIONS

4.1 Build opportunities for feedback from artists and creatives who participate in the initiatives referenced in this Plan or other initiatives that take place as a result of this Plan. (Medium to Long-term)

4.2 Promote skills development, networking and collaboration by facilitating public talks and discussions and other relevant activities involving arts and cultural organisations and diverse community groups. (Medium to Long-term)

4.3 Partner with Indigenous arts and cultural organisations to initiate programs that activate engagement of Indigenous artists in public activities, including regular venue-based performance programs. (Initiate in Short-term - action is ongoing)

4.4 Continue to assist individual artists and arts and cultural organisations to comply with relevant Council regulations, permits, obtain Council approvals and permits, access and use Council facilities and public and open spaces. (This is also Strategic Action 1.2 - ongoing)

4.5 Develop mentoring partnerships with local arts and cultural organisations with strategic support over 3 years. The support will be tailored to ensure a sustainable partnership that strengthens collaboration and skill sharing in the planning, programming and implementation of arts and cultural initiatives. (Long-term)
OBJECTIVE
Grow opportunities for people from all walks of life in the Alice Springs community to be involved in and to make a contribution to the arts and cultural life of Alice Springs.

CONTEXT
The Alice Springs Town Council believes engagement and participation in the arts inspire and challenge us with new ideas, giving us a fresh perspective on the way we view the world.

There is a considerable body of international research into neurological function and cognitive development which substantiates what many teachers, artists and parents have intuitively known for a long time - the arts are critical to education and learning. The arts are basic to a child’s personal, emotional, social and civic development. A recent study published in the journal Education Next, has established that young people who are exposed to cultural institutions such as museums and performing art centres have greater tolerance, empathy, educational memory and critical thinking skills.

The Arts and Cultural Plan supports access and participation to arts and cultural initiatives in the Alice Springs municipality as a way to build a strong and cohesive community. We know from community feedback that residents value these opportunities as important and relevant to their lives.
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

5.1 Commit to appropriate processes and communications that encourage increased participation by Indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities (as decision-makers, creatives and audience members).

5.2 Support arts and culture initiatives that are inclusive and accessible, with potential to attract high levels of engagement and participation from both local residents and visitors.

5.3 Support arts and culture initiatives that work with under-represented and vulnerable communities who are engaged through the arts.

5.4 Continue to support youth initiatives developed through the Youth Action Group and the employment of a Youth Services Officer.

5.5 Encourage greater access to arts education and participation in arts and cultural experiences for all children, irrespective of background, in Alice Springs.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

5.1 Ensure appropriate processes and communications are known and practiced by: the Public Art Advisory Committee; Tourism, Events and Promotions Committee; Youth Action Group; and the Seniors Coordinating Committee. (Ongoing)

5.2 Continue to strengthen and support Aboriginal networks and representation on: the Public Art Advisory Committee; Tourism, Events and Promotions Committee; Youth Action Group; and the Seniors Coordinating Committee to provide advice and cultural awareness. (Ongoing)

5.3 Ensure the Youth Action Group continues as a mechanism to support engagement with youth. (Ongoing)

5.4 Create a cultural awareness program with local Traditional Owners and Custodians. (Short-term to Medium-term)

5.5 Conduct an audit of existing arts and cultural organisations, events and projects that engage with youth. (Short-term to Medium-term)

5.6 Conduct an audit of existing arts and cultural organisations and initiatives that engage with under-represented and vulnerable communities. (Short-term to Medium-term)

5.7 In partnership with arts organisations, youth organisations and high schools, enable the development and implementation of safe, engaging public programs for youth that support greater engagement with arts and cultural activities. (Short-term to Medium-term)