

Draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036 and Consultation Summary

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

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City Community Services and Culture Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the draft Cultural Policy 2025–2036 (the Policy) to proceed to final public consultation beginning in mid-April for 21 days in accordance with Council's Community Consultation Policy.

Development of the Policy delivers on the Strategic Plan 2024-2028 target to develop a Cultural Policy that promotes and supports the City's unique cultural identity and opportunities.

Over 1,000 community members and key stakeholders have engaged in the Stage 1 consultation process affirming that Adelaide's cultural future is shaped by its rich heritage (with the Park Lands a major distinctive asset), strong community identity, networked and vibrant arts scene, with equity, accessibility, and sustained investment through partnership key to its success.

The Policy sets out five principles that align with Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2028:

- Amplifying our Creative Capital
- Culturally Inclusive and Socially Connected
- Reconciliation and Truth-Telling
- Preserving Cultural Heritage, Embracing Progress
- Creating Space for Cultural Expression.

The Policy proposes key priorities for each principle and roles for the City of Adelaide (CoA), including its subsidiaries, in supporting cultural vitality with a shared organisational commitment to governance, sustainability, innovation, collaboration and equity.

A final version of the Policy will be presented to Council in June 2025 for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 8 April 2025 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL
THAT COUNCIL

1. Endorses the draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036 for public consultation contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 1 April 2025.
 2. Notes the consultation summary and feedback contained in Attachment B to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 1 April 2025.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Community Our Objective is to support our communities to thrive, create fun, lively and interesting experiences and celebrate and honour community and cultures. This Policy delivers on a key strategic deliverable in that Strategic Plan that is to: <i>Develop a Cultural Policy by 2024 that promotes and supports the City's unique cultural identity and opportunities</i>. The Policy will also support the pillars of Council's Strategic Plan: Our Environment, Our Economy and Our Places.
Policy	Council does not currently have a Cultural Policy.
Consultation	Extensive consultation has been undertaken from November 2024 to March 2025 with the Community, key industry stakeholders and Council's committees and Boards. A consolidated consultation summary is presented in Attachment B to this report.
Resource	Development and consultation associated with the draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036 (the Policy) is through existing resources.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report.
Opportunities	Alignment with Federal and State policies and strategic partnerships across government, private, and community sectors will enable opportunities to seek external funding.
24/25 Budget Allocation	\$22,500 has been expended on the Policy development to date.
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The Policy is a 10-year framework from 2025 to 2036.
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

1. As a key action in its Strategic Plan 2024-2028, Council has committed to, 'Develop a Cultural Policy by 2024 that promotes and supports the City's unique cultural identity and opportunities.' Responsibility for the implementation of the Cultural Policy will extend to all areas of Council including subsidiaries.
2. The draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036 (the Policy) provided in **Attachment A** has been developed following a five-month period of extensive consultation from November 2024 to March 2025 on the Discussion Paper, *Culture - The Life Of Our City*. A high-level summary of the consultation feedback is provided in **Attachment B**, and a comprehensive summary of consultation feedback is available at [Link 1](#).
3. The Policy has been shaped through this consultation and research, incorporating insights from feedback, and benchmarking against international, national, and local government cultural policies and strategies.

Consultation and Community Engagement

4. Council endorsed consultation on the Discussion Paper, *Culture - The Life Of Our City* on 15 October 2024. This consultation took place between 4 November 2024 and 5 March 2025.
 - 4.1. Consultation activities included two stakeholder forums (200 attendees), eight community drop-in sessions (226 participants), five engagements with City of Adelaide Advisory Groups and Subsidiaries, eleven submissions, and a 51-day Our Adelaide online survey period (675 responses), ensuring broad input from residents, workers, business owners, visitors, and students.
 - 4.2. Forum participants reflected Adelaide's diverse and interconnected cultural landscape, including community, cultural and business leaders, universities and high schools, major cultural institutions, festivals, live music venues, creative practitioners and performers, policy developers and planners, peak bodies, precinct, residents and other advocacy groups.
 - 4.3. When asked to define their participation in city life, survey respondents had the opportunity to choose more than one option, reflecting that some individuals can have multiple key relationships with the City: 29% resident (49% of these were longtime residents of 10+ years), 41% City worker, and 52% visitors to the City.
 - 4.4. The survey included diverse voices, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants (15), culturally diverse respondents (68), people living with disabilities (81), and LGBTIQ+ participants (112).

Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel

5. On 27 November 2024, Administration sought feedback from the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel, and received the following feedback:
 - 5.1. Align the Draft Cultural Policy with the 'Four Year Focus' commitment in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028, specifically to "provide opportunities for artists and people with disability in arts and culture and embed this in the City of Adelaide Cultural Policy".
 - 5.2. Promote an inclusive definition of culture that addresses intersectionality.
 - 5.3. Showcase inclusive events such as Feast Festival's Picnic in the Park and the Christmas Tree Lighting, recognising them as examples of best practices in promoting inclusivity in cultural events.

Adelaide Economic Development Agency

6. Administration sought feedback from the Adelaide Economic Development Agency and its Board and received the following feedback:
 - 6.1. Culture is an extremely important element of the City's economy; it is a key part of our brand and a reason why significant numbers of people come into the city.
 - 6.2. The cultural sector is responsible for many elements that AEDA seeks to encourage—including events and festivals, Adelaide's cultural institutions, public art, music, and education.
 - 6.3. CoA's Economic Development Strategy seeks for Adelaide to be Australia's festival and creative capital, which will require significant investment and focus if it is to move from its current position.
 - 6.4. AEDA has been tasked with enabling events and experiences of every size and scale, as well as increasing employment opportunities in creative industries.
 - 6.5. The AEDA Board has expressed an interest in:
 - 6.5.1. Enhancing children and young people's engagement in the cultural life of the city including long-term strategies to increase youth engagement.

- 6.5.2. Growing and better promoting current cultural offerings, including free, accessible, all-ages activities and events across the city.
- 6.5.3. Making North Terrace a nationally significant and sought-after visitor destination based on culture, science, and education.
- 6.5.4. Packaging and promoting cultural offerings across the City and North Adelaide to enhance visibility, engagement, and accessibility.
- 6.5.5. Increasing the range of year-round bookable visitor product to enhance Adelaide's appeal as a place to come.
- 6.5.6. Opportunities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Rundle Mall in 2026.
- 6.6. Sector and community feedback to AEDA highlights key challenges, including rising costs for events and festivals, fewer rehearsal and performance spaces for musicians, workforce shortages in gaming and post-production VFX, and difficulties in attracting investment for creative projects.

Adelaide Central Market Authority

- 7. Administration sought feedback from the Adelaide Central Market Authority and received the following feedback:
 - 7.1. The City of Adelaide's investment in Market Square reinforces its commitment to cultural life, aligning with the discussion paper.
 - 7.1.1. With Market Square's expansion, live music performances will grow. ACMA also supports introducing an annual Fête de la Musique (Make Music Day) and will continue partnering with cultural organisations to activate the Market and precinct.
 - 7.2. The Cultural Policy will guide Adelaide Central Market (ACMA) programs alongside ACMA's Strategic Plan and other city strategies.
 - 7.3. Food is central to Adelaide's identity, connecting people and driving economic opportunities. The Adelaide Central Market exemplifies this through food events, collaborations with cultural organisations, and support for small businesses.
 - 7.3.1. Educational programs further promote cultural diversity and healthy eating.
 - 7.4. Expanding culinary culture will attract visitors, with ACMA exploring food tourism opportunities as part of the Market's growth.
 - 7.4.1. This aligns with the South Australian Tourism Commission's strategy to promote food and wine as key cultural assets.
 - 7.4.2. The Market already showcases diversity through cooking demonstrations, live music, and cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year, Reconciliation Week, Sauce Day, and Bastille Day.

Reconciliation Committee

- 8. On 5 February 2025, Administration sought feedback through Panpanpalya, and then from the Reconciliation Committee on 5 March 2025. Its members emphasised the need for stronger Aboriginal representation, self-determination, and meaningful partnerships in shaping Adelaide's cultural identity.
 - 8.1. Key themes included the need for Kaurna culture and history to be more visible throughout the City, truth-telling, language preservation, cultural trails, and heritage recognition.
 - 8.2. The feedback also stressed aligning with the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-27, strengthening ties with Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, and amplifying Aboriginal artists and initiatives.

Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority

- 9. On 27 February 2025, Administration sought feedback from Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority. Its members highlighted the following considerations for the Policy:
 - 9.1. *Local Subcultures & Identity*: Further explore how subcultures contribute to local identity and placemaking. Identify established cultural threads that naturally draw people in. Instead of viewing the Adelaide Park Lands as a single entity, consider highlighting distinct pockets that allow for diverse cultural expressions. The ability to contrast different Adelaide Park Lands settings—and the unique experience of feeling immersed and "lost" in them—adds to their magic.

- 9.2. *Managing Cultural Activation:* Acknowledge that hosting cultural activities in the Adelaide Park Lands may create tensions. Acceptance of associated impacts, such as noise, parking, fencing, and temporary infrastructure, is essential in balancing activation with preservation.
- 9.3. *Strengthening the Role of the Park Lands:* Encourage a stronger emphasis on the Adelaide Park Lands' role in Adelaide's cultural life, ensuring this is clearly articulated and reinforced throughout the policy.
- 9.4. *Expanding the Definition of Culture:* Culture is often associated with vibrancy—noise, movement, colour, and activity. There is also room for silence, respite, and retreat within this Policy. Recognising these quieter, reflective elements could add additional depth.
- 9.5. *Cultural Significance & Storytelling:* While the Adelaide Park Lands are referenced, their deeper cultural and historical significance remains underexplored. Consider integrating a stronger narrative on how they have evolved over time, incorporating Kaurna perspectives, and positioning them within Adelaide's broader cultural identity (e.g. the 'City of Churches').

Policy Principles, Priorities and Roles

10. The Policy reflects Council's leadership role as the governing body for the Capital City of South Australia, its commitments to sustainable development as part of Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Music, and its responsibilities to its ratepayers and residents.
11. The Policy is designed to guide planning, review and delivery of services and programs across the organisation and its subsidiaries enabling cultural vitality to be supported enterprise wide.
12. The Policy sets out five principles that align with Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2028:
 - 12.1. *Amplifying our Creative Capital*
The CoA is committed to supporting cultural jobs and creative careers to attract and retain talent, ensuring a thriving cultural and creative sector and community that drives innovation and economic development.
 - 12.2. *Culturally Inclusive and Socially Connected*
The CoA prioritises cultural diversity and representation, creating opportunities for people of all backgrounds to engage in and contribute to the city's cultural landscape.
 - 12.3. *Reconciliation and Truth Telling*
The CoA is committed to supporting First Nations-led cultural initiatives, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are central to the city's cultural expression and development.
 - 12.4. *Preserving Cultural Heritage, Embracing Progress*
The CoA is dedicated to revitalising and preserving historic culturally significant practices, sites and stories, ensuring cultural heritage preservation aligns with modernisation and city development.
 - 12.5. *Creating Space for Cultural Expression*
The CoA is committed to enhancing vibrancy, liveability, and global recognition through accessible and diverse cultural infrastructure, experiences, and events, while celebrating traditions that foster connection, creativity, and cultural expression.
13. Under each principle in the Policy, key priorities have been defined. The Policy also outlines proposed roles of CoA and its subsidiaries in supporting cultural vitality, reflecting a shared commitment to responsible governance, sustainability, innovation, collaboration and equity.

Evaluation and Governance of the Cultural Policy

14. This framework will allow the CoA to assess its services, programs, partnerships, and infrastructure, identify gaps and opportunities by developing metrics and evaluation tools and strategically allocate resources to support cultural growth and sustainability.

Next Steps

15. If endorsed by the City Community Services and Culture Committee and subsequently Council, the Policy will proceed to final public consultation during April and May 2025 for a 21-day period.
 - 15.1. Public consultation for the Policy will be focused on the Our Adelaide platform, encouraging broad community engagement.
 - 15.2. Council advisory groups, subsidiaries, committees, and consultation participants will be notified and invited to contribute to the draft policy through online platforms, direct engagement, or written submissions.
16. A report will be presented to Council in June 2025 with the final Cultural Policy for endorsement, informed by community feedback, and with a consultation summary.
17. Once adopted, the Policy will serve as a strategic framework for CoA, embedding responsibility across Council operations and decision-making processes for the cultural vitality of our City through to 2036.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036 Consultation Summary Report

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036

Attachment B – Draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036 High Level Consultation Summary Report

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