

Cultural Policy

Date this document was adopted

non-legislative

PURPOSE

The purpose of the City of Adelaide's inaugural Cultural Policy is to promote and support the city's unique cultural identity and opportunities to strengthen Adelaide's role as a global cultural capital through to 2036.

It aligns with the UNESCO Creative Cities mission, recognising that Adelaide is Australia's first and only UNESCO Creative City of Music and is part of a global network committed to fully capitalising on its cultural assets and using them as foundational elements for sustainable, inclusive and balanced development across economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions.

The Cultural Policy informs a unified and collaborative approach across the City of Adelaide and its subsidiaries in valuing, protecting, championing, and promoting the city's unique character, identity, history, creativity, cultural life and communities. It guides strategic investment in infrastructure, funding programs, partnerships, resources, events, initiatives and activities.

CONTEXT

Adelaide / Tarntanya is the Capital City, the civic and cultural heart of South Australia, and a vibrant gateway to the regions. It is the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains, and we honour and respect their continuous culture, custodianship, and relationship with this land.

It is unique in its design as the world's only city surrounded by Park Lands resulting from the vision of the Surveyor General of South Australia, Colonel William Light. Our community has a proud history of advocating for the protection of our city's distinctive heritage and cultural assets.

Adelaide was founded on ideas of social and political freedom and has been shaped by the diverse cultures and communities it has welcomed over generations. A University city and innovation hub, Adelaide continues to attract global talent, investment and new industries, as one of Australia's most competitive places to do business.

Renowned for its hospitality, with exceptional food and wine, world-class festivals, centres of creative excellence, art and cultural attractions and collections, Adelaide is home to one of the largest undercover fresh produce markets in the Southern Hemisphere, is one of 10 Wine Capitals of the World, is Australia's Festival Capital and the nation's first and only, UNESCO City of Music.

The Cultural Policy aligns with and enables the four pillars of the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028:

- Building a vibrant, connected and inclusive COMMUNITY
- Creating a resilient, protected and sustainable ENVIRONMENT
- Growing and developing an innovative and responsive ECONOMY
- Creating interesting, purposeful and safe PLACES.

The City of Adelaide acknowledges the Kaurna people as the Traditional Owners of the Country where the city of Adelaide is situated, and pays its respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

PRINCIPLES. PRIORITIES & ROLE

The Cultural Policy sets out core principles that affirm the inherent value and importance of culture, creativity and community to our city's distinctive identity and future prosperity. All policy principles hold equal value and are applied without any hierarchical ranking or order of importance acknowledging that the city's cultural life is complex, dynamic and interconnected.

For each principle, the priorities and the role of the City of Adelaide are clearly defined, ensuring transparency and accountability. In this way, the Cultural Policy establishes a shared responsibility across the organisation to prioritise culture in future planning, investment, partnerships, and resource allocation.

The principles, priorities and role of the City of Adelaide reflect and are responsive to the vision of the Council and its subsidiaries and Committees, as well as the needs of the community and other key stakeholders.

PRINCIPLE: AMPLIFYING OUR CREATIVE CAPITAL

The City of Adelaide aims to be Australia's cultural and creative capital by nurturing careers and sector growth and supporting talent retention, through partnerships and co-investment. By leveraging its UNESCO Creative City status, Adelaide showcases local talent globally, driving economic growth through its cultural sector.

This principle is reflected in the following priorities that acknowledge that Adelaide is a cultural and creative capital:

- Amplify Adelaide's UNESCO City of Music designation to showcase the city's cultural life, talent, strengths and stories on the global stage.
- Support cultural jobs and creative careers to position culture and creativity as key drivers of economic development, employment, imagination and innovation.
- Celebrate Adelaide's unique cultural identity and enable opportunities for international exchange and collaboration.

Council's role in leading Adelaide as a Cultural and Creative Capital:

Lead: Drive Adelaide's growth as a cultural tourism destination and creative capital through strategic planning and leveraging relationships with government, universities, the private sector, non-government organisations, peak bodies and individuals to invest in creative sector growth.

Enable: Support local creatives at all stages, backgrounds, and abilities, nurturing cultural jobs and professions, community-led enterprises to drive city prosperity.

Promote: Showcase Adelaide's culture, talent, and stories globally through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and Sister Cities.

PRINCIPLE: CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE AND SOCIALLY CONNECTED

Honouring the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the City of Adelaide is committed to ensuring that everyone has the right to participate in, enjoy, and contribute to the city's cultural life. We prioritise equitable, culturally safe, and affordable access for communities of all abilities and backgrounds and actively celebrate diverse cultural expressions. Culture fosters social connection, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging, enriching the everyday life of our city.

This principle is reflected in the following priorities, recognising that people are at the heart of our city and its culture.

- Enable all people to contribute, participate and be represented in the cultural life of the city.
- Ensure that access to Adelaide's culture is easy and affordable for everyone, with a focus on:
 - young people

- older people
- people living with disabilities;
- culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including both migrant and refugee people
- women and
- LGBTQIA+ communities.
- Promote a cultural life in Adelaide that showcases the strength of our sector and the diversity of our communities.

Council's role in recognising that people are at the heart of our city and its culture:

Lead: Integrate accessibility, intersectionality, inclusivity, and equity into cultural planning and delivery.

Enable: Develop, facilitate, and support affordable, accessible and community-led cultural experiences for City of Adelaide venues, public spaces, neighbourhoods, precincts, and throughout the Adelaide Park Lands.

Partner: Leverage Adelaide's status as a creative capital to advocate for transport improvements that enhance access to culture and support sector workers.

Promote: Enable equitable access to digital tools and platforms, and ensure that digital innovation supports cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion.

PRINCIPLE: RECONCILIATION AND TRUTH-TELLING

The City of Adelaide acknowledges the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the Adelaide Plains and fully supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination. We recognise the importance of addressing past injustices, centring First Nations perspectives, and promoting cultural revitalisation through language, storytelling, and creative expression.

This principle is reflected in the following priorities that honour the continuous cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

- Honour and strengthen awareness of Kaurna culture and connection to Country.
- Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures in city design, public art, festivals, events, and public spaces.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led cultural initiatives, including cultural revitalisation through language, storytelling, cultural burns, and other cultural and creative practices.

Council's role in honouring the continuous cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:

Lead: Embed Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives in policies, city planning and design and cultural programs.

Protect: Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, self-determination, and cultural heritage by showcasing, celebrating and amplifying cultures and connection to Country.

Enable: Support, facilitate, and collaborate on Kaurna and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural initiatives, including public art, festivals, events, language revitalisation, storytelling, and cultural practices.

PRINCIPLE: PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE, EMBRACING PROGRESS

The City of Adelaide is committed to preserving its cultural and natural heritage and embracing revitalisation and progress. We celebrate and strengthen our world-class architecture, cultural assets, collections, and Park Lands, ensuring Adelaide's distinctive identity and history are preserved for future generations. The city also supports diverse cultural traditions, including national commemorations, festive events, and social practices that reflect and unite the community.

This principle is reflected in the following priorities acknowledging the connection between the city's culture and its built and natural heritage while balancing modernisation with preservation:

- Protect and revitalise the city's cultural heritage including world-class architecture, iconic cultural venues, community managed spaces and collections, and preserving the Adelaide Park Lands, open spaces and natural environment.
- Ensure people, culture and creativity are at the centre of planning, design and development decisions in the city.
- Celebrate our local character, food, culture, customs, social practices and traditions, places and spaces.

Council's role in preserving cultural heritage and embracing progress:

Lead: Identify gaps and opportunities to strengthen policies and plans, and streamline processes to prioritise people, culture, creativity and heritage preservation.

Partner: Advocate for the value of Adelaide's heritage locally and internationally to influence policies and attract investment among the levers to safeguard Adelaide's festivals, built heritage, cultural venues, natural environments, and community traditions.

Enable: Support and promote projects that revitalise heritage, encourage adaptive reuse, and celebrate cultural expressions, initiatives and communities.

Promote: Highlight Adelaide's architecture, natural sites, traditions, social and cultural practices through events, storytelling and public art.

PRINCIPLE: CREATING SPACE FOR CULTURAL EXPRESSION

Council is committed to enhancing the city's vibrancy, liveability, and global profile through accessible, high-quality, and diverse cultural infrastructure, experiences, public art and activations, designed to foster connection, creativity, and cultural expression.

This principle is reflected in the following priorities that foster and celebrate a creative and culturally connected vibrant city and community.

- Embed creativity and culture into the everyday life of the city.
- Expand the city's cultural infrastructure, including activating underutilised spaces, to enhance Adelaide's appeal, foster community and create a sense of belonging.
- Ensure that creativity, along with Adelaide's unique arts, cultural experiences, and stories, is easily accessible, fuelling the city's vitality, day and night, and all year-round.

Council's role in fostering and celebrating a creative and culturally connected vibrant city and community:

Lead: Integrate creativity and culture into all aspects of city life, infrastructure and initiatives through strategic and streamlined planning, licensing, and public space use processes.

Enable: Facilitate, support, and deliver diverse and safe cultural experiences year-round in partnership with government, the private and cultural sectors and community, balancing small and large-scale cultural and community events across a diversity of spaces and the Park Lands.

Promote: Celebrate and elevate Adelaide's cultural life to enhance access to cultural experiences and opportunities and attract new audiences and investment.

APPLICATION

The City of Adelaide is part of a dynamic cultural ecosystem, a hyper-networked and innovative society that thrives through cross-sector collaboration.

To deliver on the vision for Adelaide's cultural life through to 2036, it will be vital to:

- Leverage networks, forums and; relationships at international, national, state and local levels.
- Partner with government, non-government organisations including, the private sector, education institutions, philanthropic entities, multicultural and, the community;
- Access expertise, attract resources, and sustain the city's cultural and economic growth.

The Cultural Policy 2025-2036 guides the City of Adelaide in establishing culture as a central pillar of urban and environmental planning, city growth, economic development, social cohesion, and community life to enhance Adelaide's reputation as a global cultural capital and contribute to a creative, connected, safe, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable city.

The principles and priorities of the Cultural Policy 2025–2036 will be embedded across strategies, operations, budgets, and work plans throughout the organisation, including Council subsidiaries. Its implementation will be guided by clear deliverables, appropriate resources, and measurable actions—supporting ongoing evaluation, transparency, and alignment with community and sector needs. This cohesive and considered approach represents an efficient, effective and economical use of public resources through annual business plans and budget processes.

EVALUATION

The City of Adelaide will implement appropriate governance and evaluation processes to ensure the Cultural Policy 2025-2036 delivers on its purpose, ensures effective resource allocation, drives meaningful and measurable progress, and the impact of Council's investment and decisions on the culture of the community are understood and valued. National best practices will be used in collaboration with capital city councils, the Australian Local Government Association, State and Federal Governments, peak bodies and institutions of research and learning.

The City of Adelaide will:

- Communicate achievements, challenges, and future priorities.
- Conduct a review every four years to ensure relevance, responsiveness to external factors, and alignment with current and future needs of the community.

OTHER USEFUL DOCUMENTS

Related documents

- City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028
- City of Adelaide City Plan 2036
- City of Adelaide Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024 – 2027
- City of Adelaide Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028
- City of Adelaide Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028
- City of Adelaide Heritage Our Future: Heritage Strategy & Action Plan 2021-2036
- City of Adelaide Safer City Policy 2019-2023
- City of Adelaide Integrated Climate Strategy 2030
- Adelaide Central Market Authority Charter and Strategic Plan 2023-28
- Adelaide Economic Development Agency Charter and Strategic Plan 2024-2028
- Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority Charter and Adelaide Park Lands Strategy 2025- 2035

Relevant legislation

- *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*

- *Copyright Act 1968*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005 (SA)*
- *South Australian Multicultural Act 2021 (SA)*
- *Heritage Places Act 1993 (SA)*
- *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (SA)*

Other Policies, Strategies, Guidelines and Documents informing this Policy:

- UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) Charter, 2004
- The United Nations Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2009
- National Cultural Policy, Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place, 2023
- Australian Government -Equity: The Arts and Disability Associated Plan, 2024
- Government of South Australia's Cultural Policy- A Place to Create, 2025
- South Australian Multicultural Charter, 2021
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy for South Australia 2019 (SA)
- National Association for the Visual Arts: Code of Practice 2024
- Creative Australia: Using First Nations Protocols for Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts 2023
- Australian Local Government Association: Arts & Culture Policy Position 2022

GLOSSARY

Throughout this document, the following terms have been used and are defined as:

Culture

Culture is a fundamental human right that enriches lives, fosters creativity, and shapes identity. It reflects our way of life, values, traditions, and beliefs, expressed through art, architecture, festivals, food, language, literature, and music. The City of Adelaide's Cultural Policy defines culture as including the arts, creative industries, and heritage sectors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices, diverse identities shaped by migration and history, and cultural expressions reflecting contemporary Adelaide.

Creative

A creative is an individual or group engaged in artistic expression, innovation, and cultural production, generating cultural, social, and economic value. In this policy, creatives include artists, performers, musicians, designers, architects, digital media professionals, writers, filmmakers, storytellers, cultural practitioners, and heritage workers. They shape identity, foster connections, and drive economic growth, making them essential to Adelaide's thriving cultural landscape.

Cultural Infrastructure

Cultural infrastructure includes physical, digital, and social spaces that support art, culture, and community engagement. It covers galleries, museums, theatres, creative hubs, public spaces, festivals and heritage sites, as well as digital platforms that expand cultural access. This valuable resource strengthens Adelaide's cultural, social, and economic vitality, reinforcing its identity as a vibrant and creative city.

Disability

In the City of Adelaide' Cultural Policy, people with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, psycho-social, mental, intellectual, cognitive, neurological or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full

and effective participation in community and cultural life on an equal basis with others.

Heritage

Refers to the legacy of tangible and intangible assets inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and passed on to future generations. It encompasses both cultural and natural elements that hold historical, social or environmental significance.

Self-Determination

Self-determination is an ongoing process of ensuring that peoples are able to make decisions about matters that affect their lives. Essential to the exercise of self-determination is choice, participation and control.

Truth-Telling

Truth-telling enables a fuller and more accurate account of Australia's history to recognise the strength and contribution of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It acknowledges the historical silencing of injustices and ongoing impacts of colonisation on First Nations peoples. Truth-telling is fundamental to advancing Reconciliation.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an international milestone document that sets out fundamental human rights to be universally protected at a global and local level. These are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person, everywhere, simply because they are human. These rights are inalienable, meaning, they cannot be taken away, and they apply regardless of nationality, race, gender, religion, language, or any other status. They include civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Specifically, Article 27, grants everyone the freedom to engage in cultural activities, enjoy artistic expressions, and benefit from scientific progress. In this Policy, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is referenced to highlight City of Adelaide's equity responsibilities in respect to cultural rights, to ensure that everyone has the right to participate in, enjoy, and contribute to the city's cultural life.

ADMINISTRATIVE

As part of Council's commitment to deliver the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan, services to the community and the provision of transparent information, all policy documents are reviewed as per legislative requirements or when there is no such provision a risk assessment approach is taken to guide the review timeframe.

This Policy document will be reviewed every 4 years unless legislative or operational change occurs beforehand. The next review is required in 2029.

Review history:

Trim Reference	Authorising Body	Date/ Decision ID	Description of Edits
<i>ACC2018/9000 (example)</i>	<i>Associate Director People & Governance</i>	<i>19/12/2018</i>	<i>Minor amendments made to illustrate a change in operational process</i>
	Council		Inaugural Policy endorsed by Council

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