

CREATIVE BANYULE 2030

INSIGHTS REPORT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Image credit: Lantern Festival, Andreas Weiss 2023

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REPORT: INSIGHTS - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Jade Lillie, May 2023

BACKGROUND

Since August 2022, Banyule City Council has been working with consultant, Jade Lillie to develop and design the approach and delivery for Council's next Arts and Culture Strategy, *Creative Banyule 2030*.

The following stages have been completed:

1. Roadmap: outlining intersections between Council's existing policies and plans
2. Literature Review: a national perspective on the intersecting strategies, policies and frameworks pertaining to Creative Banyule
3. Draft Vision, Focus Areas and Outcomes development
4. Community Engagement: online and in-person focus groups in addition to surveys with community, staff and Councillors.

Throughout February and March 2023, the Banyule community had an opportunity to respond to the draft vision, focus areas and outcomes through *Shaping Banyule*. In addition, we hosted a number of focus groups internally and externally including:

- Council staff
- Banyule Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (BACAC)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee
- Artists and Creatives
- Creative Industries
- General community.

One of the key aims for each session was to gather feedback on the draft vision, strategic focus areas and draft outcome areas. This will assist us in the development of the next iteration which will be included in the draft strategy and published for feedback in July/August 2023.

Please see Appendix A for an outline of the methodology used in consultation and engagement.

SUMMARY

Arts and culture is deeply valued by Banyule - artists, creatives, residents, businesses, traders, venues and Council's collaborators.

141 community members participated in the recent consultation and engagement process, with 87 participating in focus groups and 54 responding to the survey. 93% of respondents live in Banyule with 4% identified they work in Banyule.

0.11% of the Banyule population participated in the consultation and engagement for Creative Banyule however, it should be noted that in the sample, consistency of responses alongside the literature review and policy roadmap, allow us to draw the following conclusions.

Based on feedback, considerations for Creative Banyule might include:

- **Greater investment** in arts and culture - Council programs and grant-based investment and commissions that are artist and community led
- Increased access to **creative spaces** - to create and present
- Opportunities for **informal and formal networking** - artists and creatives, local businesses and broader community
- A focus on **children and young people**
- **Increased visibility** of arts and culture - public art, festivals and the communication of opportunities.

ARTS + CULTURE IN BANYULE

We asked participants (focus group and survey respondents) what arts and culture means to them.

While some responses included 'entertainment,' focus group participants predominantly spoke of a connection to communications, ways of expressing their identities, a sense that culture is everything and cannot be separated from life along with how we deeply listen to each other.

When we asked people to respond to the question ‘tell us three words that best describe what arts and culture means to you?’ The top ten survey responses were: *expression, connection, creativity, culture, joy, life, fun, community.*



What is the current arts and cultural offering at Banyule?

In the focus groups, we asked participants how they would currently describe Banyule's arts and cultural offering.

The top five responses were:

- Festivals - Lantern Festival, Arty Farty (children's festival), East Ivanhoe Street Party and Eco Festival
- Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub (ILCH) - well-loved and commended by all focus groups
- Exhibitions - ILCH and outdoor
- JETS - youth specific space
- Public art and murals.

This suggests that while there are considerable activities on offer, there is possibly a lack of information or understanding about the depth and breadth of activity. This was reiterated in the broader focus group discussions relating to the lack of promotion and access to information regarding arts and cultural events and opportunities.

What are residents currently accessing?

For survey respondents, we asked about the types of activities they are currently participating to understand where the bulk of audience activity is. Respondents could choose more than one response:

Activities	% participating
Festivals	57%
Performances	54%
Cultural and creative events	54%
Exhibitions at Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub (ILCH)	46%
Creative workshops	21%
Artist Talks	14%
Pinpoint Artist Network	11%
Banyule arts and culture project grants	16%
Public Art, murals and street art	43%
Markets	48%
Community arts activity	25%
Other	2%

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Our vision for Creative Banyule is ...

We asked participants to tell us what their vision for Creative Banyule is. The core themes include:

- Diversity and diverse community members are supported and engaged
- Art everywhere - inside and out on the streets
- Artists and communities celebrated and at the centre of the vision
- Intercultural and intergenerational engagement
- To share the love of arts and culture with everyone across the municipality
- Banyule is a place where the arts can flourish.

Draft vision

The draft vision was developed by Council staff, in consultation with the Banyule Arts and Cultural Advisory Group and the consultant. We asked participants what they thought about it and if it was something that represented their vision for *Creative Banyule 2030*.

VISION: 'Enriching people, places and ideas through a thriving and valued creative culture.'

Are we getting it right?	Yes	No	Somewhat
	46%	14%	38%

Most participants identified the draft vision as being right or somewhat right. Feedback from the focus groups about what felt right included:

- It embraces every element of 'being creative'
- A positive aspiration covering a wide scope
- Brings together different culture and identifies Banyule as a creative hub
- Feels supportive of artists' economic viability - thriving/valued.

We asked survey respondents and focus group participants what was missing and what needed to be different. Feedback from focus group and survey respondents included:

- Feels 'top down' as though Council are imposing these things rather than from ground up
- Potentially 'elitist' because a lot of people don't connect with a concept of 'creative culture'. In addition, creative culture suggests thinking and acting rather than participating
- Similarly, the same focus group would like to see 'connection' in the vision as this brings people together
- One focus group mentioned it could be more aligned with risk - creative and ideas
- There could be greater reference to environment, natural and green spaces
- Two survey respondents asked if it speaks to older people in the community
- Some people suggested we include ... to help develop a sense of community and belonging
- We want everyone to understand this vision - it does not speak to grassroots.

The research undertaken, see [A View from Middle Australia: Perceptions of Arts, Culture and Creativity, New Approach 2020](#), does suggest that the terms 'arts and culture' need to be kept together for everyone to understand and connect with the terminology. There is the potential to include the term 'creativity', although in line with the literature, a focus on 'arts and culture' for accessibility and inclusion of all communities and individuals should also be maintained.

Strategic Focus Areas (SFA)

These areas were generally not contested and people felt as though they are the right focus areas for this strategy, at this time. Endorsement for the focus areas can be established through the percentage of survey respondents who showed agreement as below.

Given the levels of endorsement, this suggests there is a place for all five of the proposed SFA in the Strategy.

Respondents also suggested activities that could be considered for each SFA. These are listed below:

Strategic Focus Area	Importance rated by Respondents	Possible activities to consider (top responses)
Elevate First Nations culture	70 out of 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-determined by First Nations artists • Learning opportunities and workshops for non-Indigenous community members • Exhibitions and cultural activities • Welcome to Country ceremonies across Banyule parks • Walks and installations about history and culture in public places.

Develop the creative sector and build its resilience	78 out of 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase paid opportunities for local artists • Sector development activities - training, workshops, talks and symposiums • Increase promotion of artists and events that are not Council-led • Connections between young, emerging and established artists • Increased investment through grants and commissions • Spaces for artists to create, rehearse, share skills and present work • More opportunities for d/Deaf and disabled artists • Incentives for local creative businesses.
Foster social connection, health and wellbeing	89 out of 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of informal opportunities for community to come together and learn, experience and share arts and culture • Pedestrian art trails to encourage people to be outside, walk and learn • Local artists leading creative activities and workshops that are low-cost or free for community • Community festivals • Active engagement with vulnerable citizens and communities via creative hubs and physical spaces.
Increase engagement and participation in arts and cultural experiences	86 out of 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information and pathways 'that reaches everyone' • Engagement with schools, children and young people • Consistent arts programs, workshops and activities ie weekly workshop program • Social media - activation of digital content • Libraries and cultural hubs.
Realise the creative potential of Banyule's urban places.	77 out of 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accessible arts spaces for activities • Sculptures, walks and art trails along Darebin creek and other natural spaces • More public art, street art and murals (mentioned by many)

Focus group participants agreed with the five SFA as the priorities for *Creative Banyule 2030*.

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee would like to consider an alternative word to 'Elevate' in relation to First Nations culture. Non-Indigenous focus group participants also referenced this term as potentially contentious. This will be discussed further with the RAP Advisory Committee.

Other community members also expressed that there is a lack of diversity referenced in these focus areas. This could be addressed in context of strategy in understanding the Banyule community and who is represented within the strategy. Suggested approaches and possible tweaks could include:

- Further discussion with the RAP Advisory Group regarding appropriate terminology. Would Celebrate be an option? Other suggestions from the focus group participants include Enjoy and Explore.
- Discuss inclusion of Diverse cultures in point one, with RAP Working Group

- Consider including natural environment in the final point.
- Consider including 'intergenerational and intercultural' participation in point four.
- Consider the term 'Foster' in point three, perhaps Increase or Enhance for a more active term.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES + OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT

As expected, the Banyule community is not short on ideas. There has been a great response to opportunities for investment and the activities people would like to see more of.

The top survey responses relating to what residents would like to see more of includes:

- **Local artists** - increased support, visibility, promotion and opportunities
- **Inclusion** - strong calls for First Nations, CALD and disability representation in all aspects of programs, communication and opportunities
- **Flexibility and access** - workshop programs to learn new skills, after-hours and during business hours programming - this was a call for community members of all ages and interests to be catered for
- **Children and young people** - increased opportunities and engagement with these age groups
- Programming - a strong call for **writing/literary events** and events **celebrating local history, architecture** and **First Nations stories**
- **Public Art and Murals** - ensuring art can be seen in our urban and natural spaces.

When we asked artists and creatives how Banyule could better support them. Top responses were:

- **Local artists** - paid opportunities for creating and presenting work and artist-led programming. All opportunities should be paid and include a contribution to superannuation, as is standard
- **Promotion and publicity** - celebrating and profiling artists, creatives and creative businesses in Banyule
- **Creative spaces** - creating, making and presenting spaces along with studios in un-used shops and community spaces. A multi-purpose, community arts centre.
- **Networking and connection** - informal and formal opportunities to connect, collaborate and share skills and information. The Pinpoint website was noted as useful.
- **Investment** - grants and commissions that support local artists to make work in, for and with Banyule. This point also included easier to access grant processes with support available, if needed.

We also asked how to build and create new audiences across the municipality, responses included:

- **Promotion and publicity** - increased visibility of exhibitions, events and programs through website, social media (specifically Instagram and Facebook), billboards and community hubs such as neighbourhood houses. A What's On guide or calendar of events was mentioned
- **Programming** - increased programming and activities for children, young people and older people
- **Events** - a mix of digital, hybrid and in-person events
- **Diversity** - broader community engagement and collaboration with CALD and First Nations communities.

COMMUNICATION

We asked Banyule residents how best to communicate with them. Top responses included:

- Social Media - Instagram has been mentioned specifically
- Letterbox drops - could be covered through Banyule Banner but possible to include profiles of artists and community events that are not Council-run
- Brochures/posters/billboards in public and community spaces
- Guerrilla style marketing - paste ups, trash cans and signage
- More digital and video content.

CLOSING SUMMARY

There is strong community endorsement for *Creative Banyule 2030*. It is clear that artists and communities should be at the centre of this strategy with a focus on employment, investment, celebration, promotion and creative spaces.

The Banyule community is calling for more opportunities for artists, creative spaces for all to access, events and activities that celebrate the beautiful environment around the municipality and a focus on children and young people, intergenerational and intercultural activity. There are opportunities to reach more residents and audiences through increased promotion and dedicated communication and marketing activity that is specific to arts and cultural activity.

Creative Banyule 2030 is well-placed to deliver on all of Council's priority themes:

- Inclusive and Connected Community
- Sustainable Environment
- Well-Built City
- Valued Community Assets and Facilities
- Thriving Local Economy
- Trusted and Responsive Leadership.

This is an exciting time for the Council and for the Banyule community.

Thank you to all who have participated via workshop, focus group, survey and internal meetings. We look forward to producing a strategy that everyone can be proud.

Prepared by Jade Lillie, April 2023.

Draft reviewed by Arts and Culture and Community Engagement teams.

Finalised May 2023.



Image credit: Twilight Sounds, Andreas Weiss 2022

APPENDIX A – Methodology

The methodology used for focus groups and surveys is outlined below:

FOCUS GROUPS

We hosted seven (7) focus groups/workshops with over 141 community members and staff in attendance.

The focus groups were specified as follows:

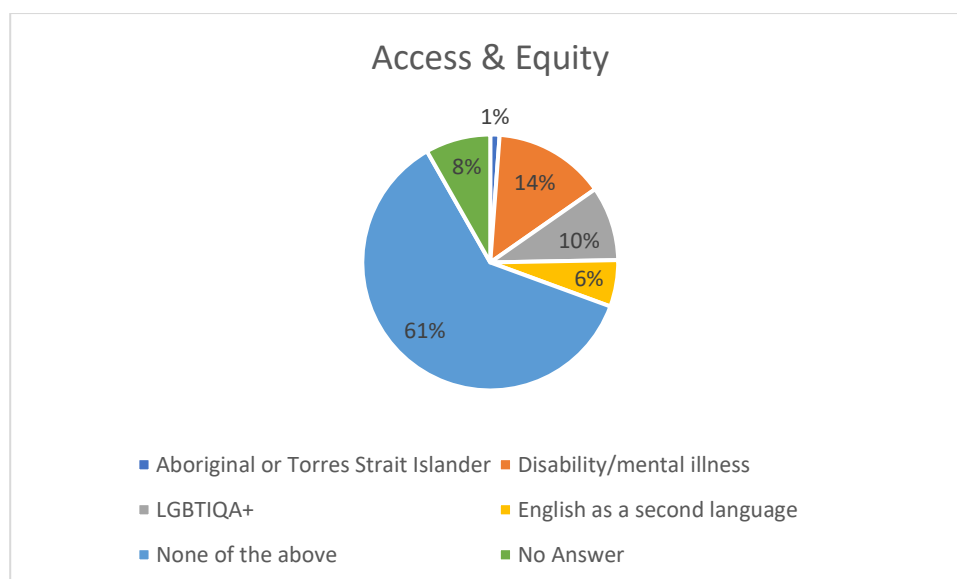
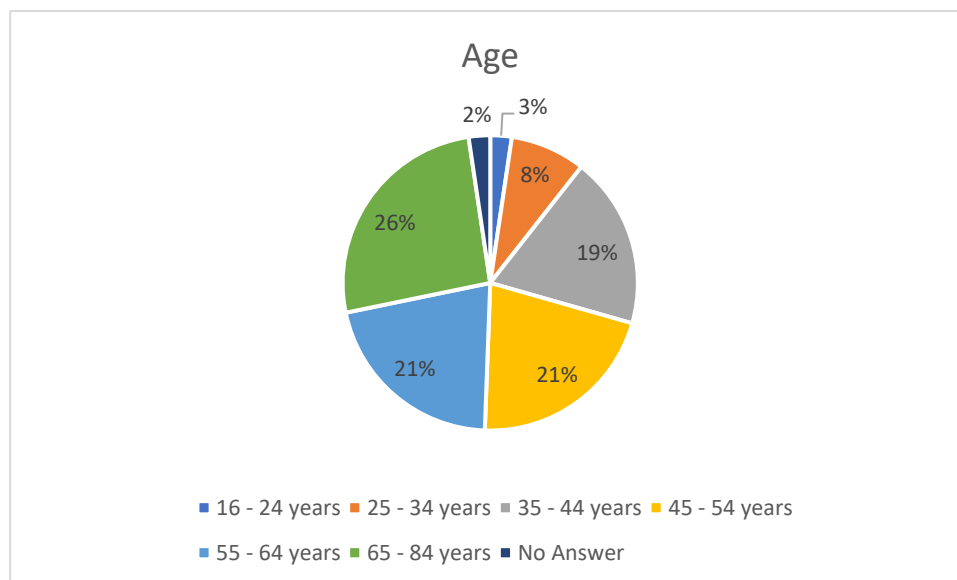
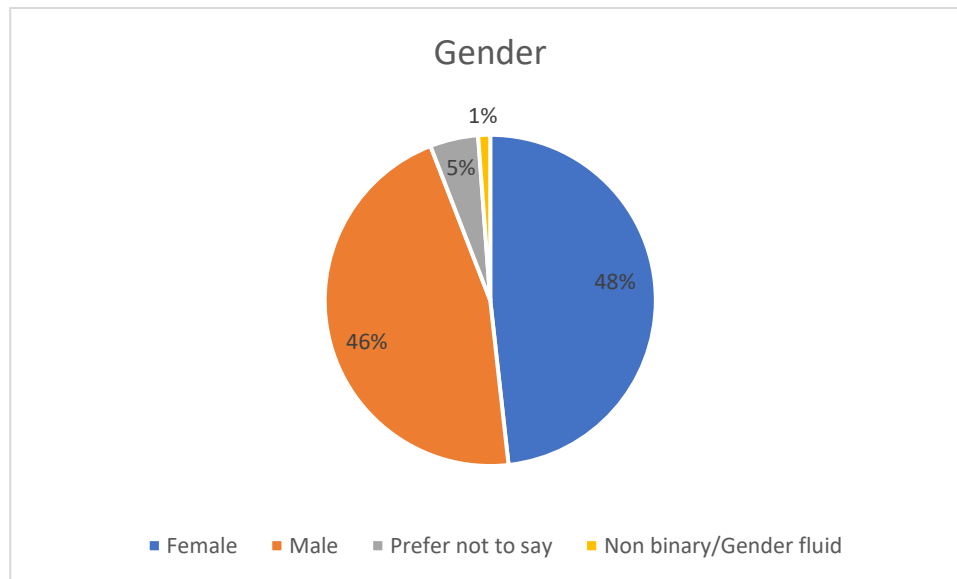
- Artists and creatives, including Industry
- Community Consultation 1 - in person
- Community Consultation 2 - online
- Banyule Arts and Culture Advisory Group
- Banyule RAP Working Group
- Internal - Arts and Culture Team
- Internal - Council-wide

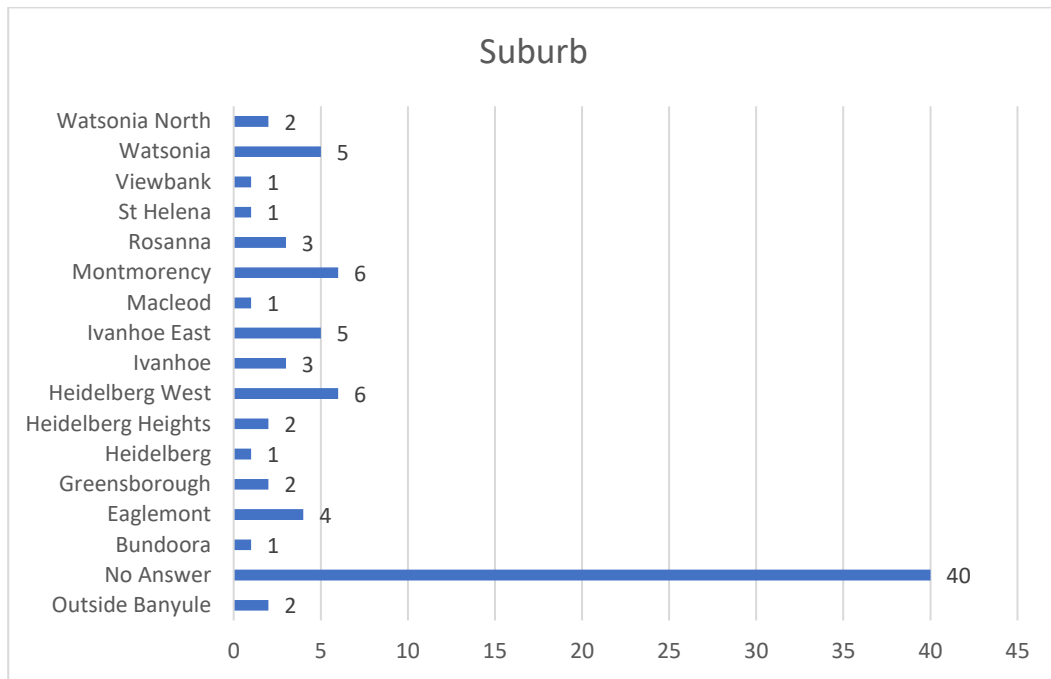
Questions we asked included:

- What does arts and culture mean to you?
- How do you describe Council's current arts and cultural offering?
- How can Banyule better support artists and creatives?
- How can we build audiences for arts and culture across the whole municipality?
- What would you like to see more of?
- What is your #1 idea for a Creative Banyule in 2030?
- How can we communicate better with you?
- What is your vision for Creative Banyule 2030

APPENDIX B – Demographics

85 community members we engaged with provided demographic details:





APPENDIX C - SURVEYS

Through Shaping Banyule, we invited survey responses from the general community.

We had a total of 54 responses:

- 27% artists
- 2% arts organisations
- 71% community members.

93% of respondents live in Banyule with 4% identifying they work in Banyule. The

Shaping Banyule survey contained the following questions:

- What is your connection to Banyule?
 - An artist or creative
 - An arts and culture organisation
- A community member
- Tell us three words that best describe what arts and culture means to you?
- What Banyule Council arts and cultural activities do you currently participate in? Choose all that apply.
 - Festivals
 - Performance
 - Cultural and creative events
 - Exhibitions at ILCH
 - Creative workshops
 - Artist talks
 - Pinpoint Artist Network
 - Banyule Arts and Culture Project Grants
 - Public art, murals and street art
 - Markets

- Community arts activity
 - Other
- Is there anything else Banyule Council should be doing in the arts and culture space?
- My vision for a Creative Banyule is ... *[complete the sentence]*
- Vision - do we have it right?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Somewhat
 - Is there anything missing?
- Focus areas - anything missing?
 - Elevating First Nations Culture
 - What activities should we consider introducing to help?
 - Develop the creative sector
 - What activities should we consider introducing to help?
 - Foster social connection, health and wellbeing
 - What activities should we consider introducing to help?
 - Increase engagement and participation in arts and cultural experiences
 - What activities should we consider introducing to help?
 - Realise the creative potential of Banyule's urban spaces and places
 - What activities should we consider introducing to help?
- Are there ways we can improve support for artists and creatives?
- If we were to design a program to build the capability and resilience of artists and creatives, what would we need to consider?
- If there were more resources for arts and culture, where should they be invested and who should benefit?
- Do you have any ideas on how can we build new audiences for creative works?
- Finally, is there anything else you think Council should consider in the development of Creative Banyule 2030?