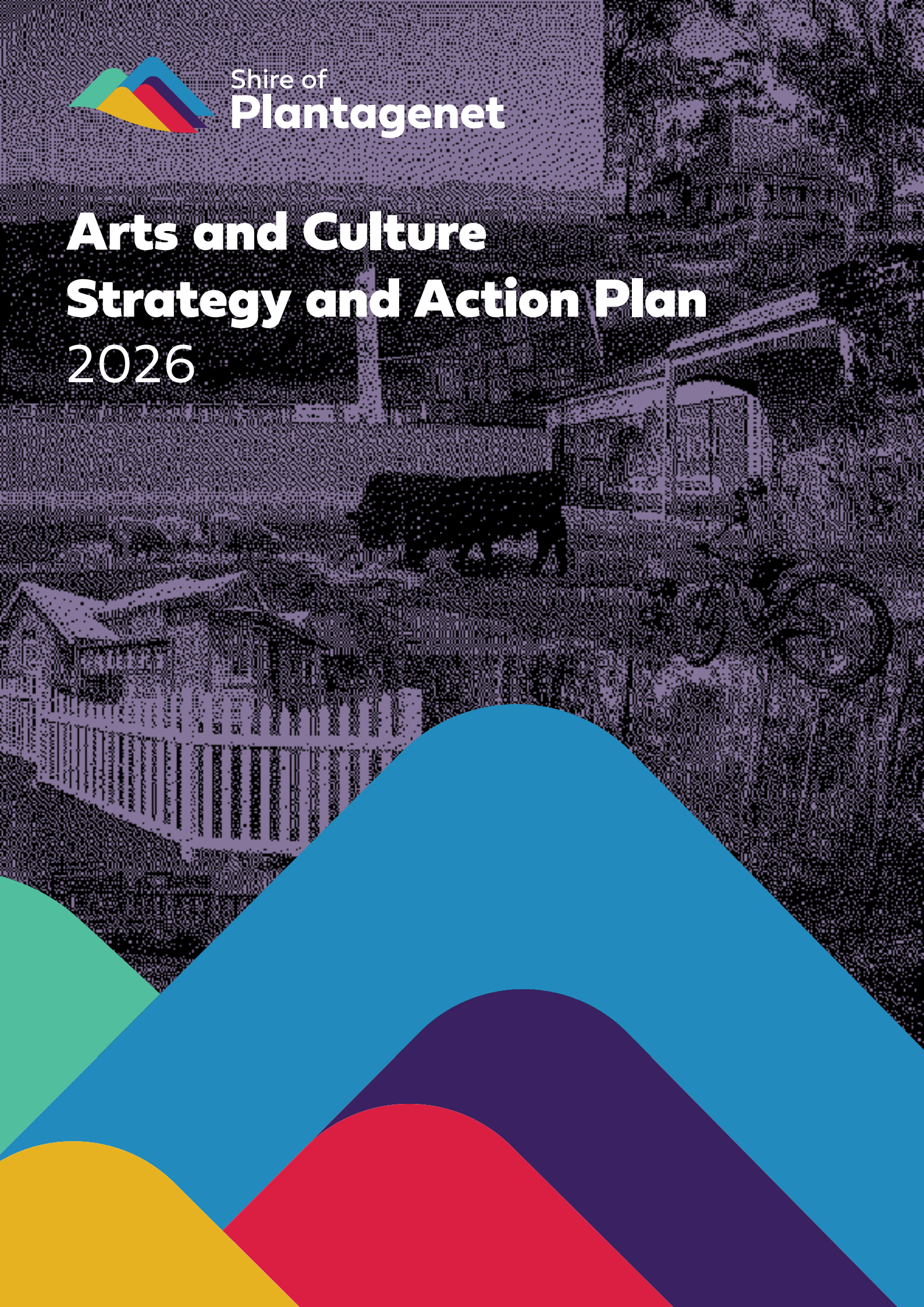
Shire of
Plantagenet

Arts and Culture Strategy and Action Plan 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Plantagenet acknowledges the traditional custodians of our area and their continuing connection to the land and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Menang Noongar community and to their culture; and to Elders past and present.

Revision Record

Revision	Date	Prepared By	Checked By	Authorised By
1	10 August 2026	Vani Kunnappilly	Kate Parker	Kate Parker
2	01 September 2026	Vani Kunnappilly	Kate Parker	Kate Parker

Basis of Report

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR) with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the timescale and resources allocated to it by agreement with Shire of Plantagenet (the Client). Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected, which has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid. SLR may have used artificial intelligence (AI) in the preparation of this document. Should SLR use AI, any information and analysis resulting therefrom will be reviewed for accuracy.

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Contents

Executive Summary 1

1. Introduction 3

1.1 A New Era for Arts, Culture and Creativity 3
1.2 Why Arts and Culture Matter 3
1.3 Purpose of the Arts and Culture Strategy 2026–2030 5

2. Methodology 6

Research and Context Analysis 7
Community and Stakeholder Engagement 7
Analysis and Strategy Development 7
Refinement and Finalisation 7

3. Plantagenet Today 9

3.1 Cultural background 9
3.2 Demographic Overview 11
3.3 A Strong Creative Foundation 12
3.4 Existing Arts and Cultural Assets 13

4. Stakeholder Engagement 17

4.1 Key Engagement Questions 18
4.2 Key Engagement Findings 19

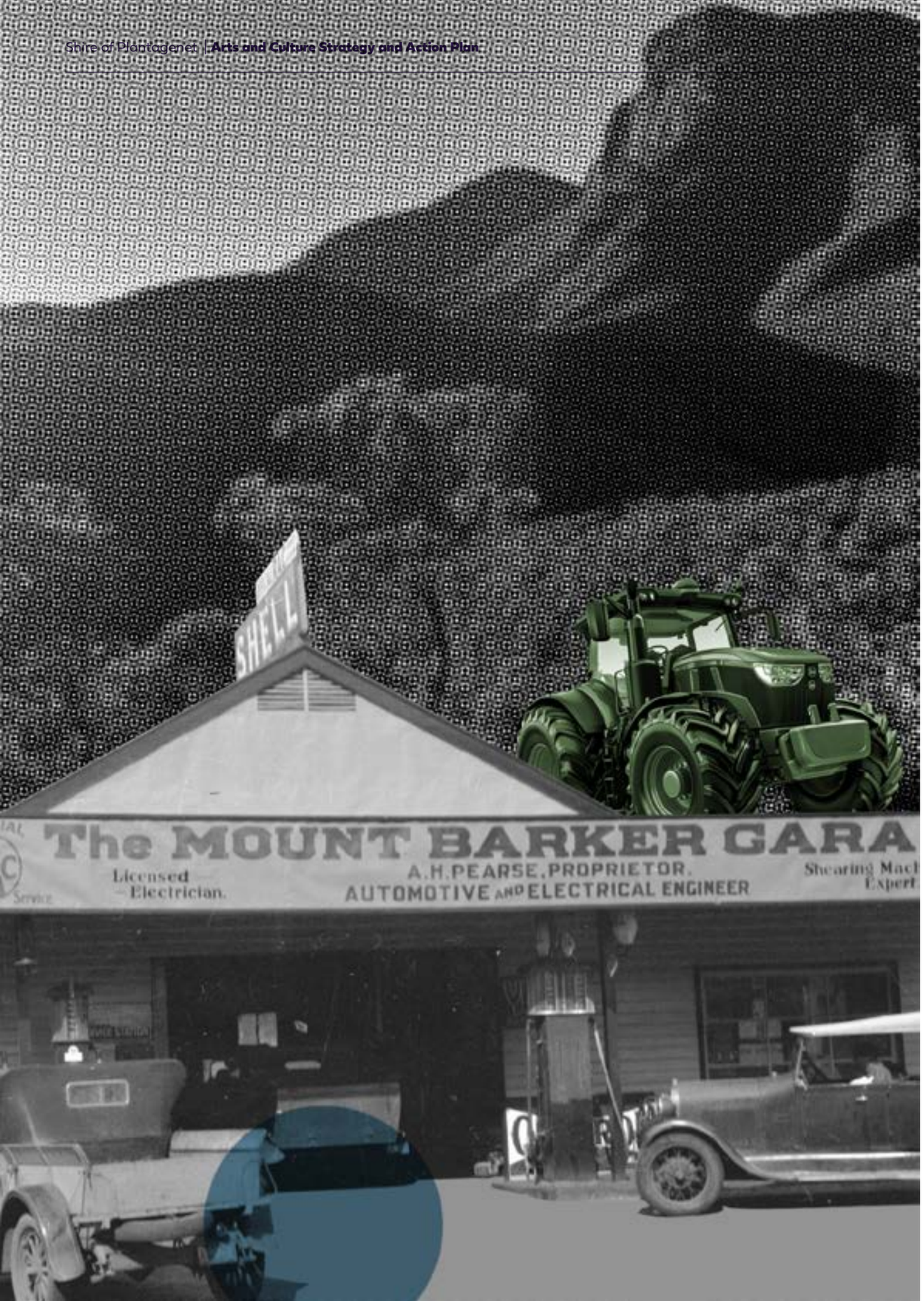
5. Issues and Opportunities 27

6. Strategic Framework 31

6.1 Vision 31
6.2 Strategic Objectives 32

7. Action Plan (TBC) 35

7.1 High Priority Actions 35



Executive Summary

The Shire of Plantagenet enters the next decade from a position of strength. The region is home to a rich cultural landscape shaped by Menang Noongar Country, agricultural heritage and the iconic Stirling and Porongurup Ranges. Supported by a dedicated volunteer community, renowned local artists, active community organisations and a growing, increasingly diverse population, these elements contribute to a distinctive and vibrant sense of place.

As Plantagenet's first Arts and Culture Strategy, this document provides a shared vision and roadmap for strengthening arts, culture and creativity across the Shire over the next five years. It recognises that arts and culture are more than galleries, festivals and performances. It is the stories people share, the traditions they celebrate, the places they gather, and the creative ways communities express identity, belonging, and connection.

Informed by research, benchmarking and extensive community engagement involving approximately 162 participants, the Strategy reflects strong community pride in Plantagenet's identity, creativity and cultural foundations. It also responds to a clear desire for greater visibility, stronger connections, increased participation and stronger support for artists, volunteers and community organisations. Community members recognised the important role arts and culture play in fostering belonging, wellbeing, cultural understanding, tourism and economic development.

These insights informed a vision for a connected and inclusive Plantagenet, where stories, culture, heritage and nature inspire a vibrant creative future for all. It imagines a future where creativity is woven into everyday life; local stories are celebrated, diverse voices are welcomed, artists and communities are supported, and arts and culture contribute to community wellbeing, economic opportunity and a strong sense of place.

To realise this vision, the Strategy is structured around five strategic objectives that respond directly to the aspirations, opportunities and challenges identified through community engagement and research. Together, these objectives provide a framework for celebrating local identity, strengthening the creative community, fostering inclusion and belonging, building capacity and creating experiences that contribute to both community wellbeing and economic vitality.

Over the next five years, the Shire will work in partnership with artists, community organisations, Aboriginal people, businesses and residents to celebrate local stories, strengthen creative networks, expand participation, build local capacity and increase the visibility of arts and culture across the region. The Strategy also seeks to strengthen connections between cultural, heritage, tourism and visitor experiences, supporting both community wellbeing and economic development.

Through these actions, the Strategy aims to build a more connected, inclusive and sustainable creative ecosystem where creativity is visible, participation is encouraged, local stories are celebrated and arts and culture continue to contribute to community wellbeing, cultural vitality and economic development.

Plantagenet already possesses many of the foundations of a thriving creative community. The opportunity is not to create culture from scratch, but to nurture, connect and celebrate the creativity, stories and cultural assets that already exist across the Shire. Through shared leadership, collaboration and community partnership, this Strategy aims to strengthen cultural identity, support local creativity and create a more connected, inclusive and vibrant future where arts and culture continue to enrich community life, support the local economy and reinforce Plantagenet's reputation as a distinctive place to live, work, visit and belong.

Objective 1 Celebrate Place and Identity	Celebrate the stories, landscapes, heritage and cultural traditions that make Plantagenet unique while strengthening connections to Menang Noongar Country and fostering a stronger sense of place.
Objective 2 Strengthen and Connect the Creative Community	Support artists, creatives, volunteers and organisations through stronger networks, partnerships, collaboration and visibility both within the Shire and across the Great Southern region.
Objective 3 Foster Inclusion, Belonging and Cultural Exchange	Use arts and culture as tools for participation, connection and cultural understanding while creating opportunities for underrepresented voices, including Aboriginal people, young people and culturally diverse communities, to contribute to and shape community life.
Objective 4 Build Capacity and Future Readiness	Strengthen the skills, leadership, infrastructure and support systems needed for arts and culture to flourish, including digital capability, succession planning, creative entrepreneurship and volunteer sustainability.
Objective 5 Create Experiences and Opportunities	Connect arts, culture, heritage, tourism, food, wine and nature-based experiences to create memorable experiences that strengthen community pride, support local businesses and encourage visitors to stop, stay and explore.

1. Introduction

1.1 A New Era for Arts, Culture and Creativity

The Shire of Plantagenet is entering a new chapter in its cultural journey. As the Shire's first Arts and Culture Strategy, this document recognises the creativity, community spirit and cultural richness that already exist across Mount Barker, Kendenup, Porongurup, Narrikup and Rocky Gully. It acknowledges that arts and culture are not created by institutions alone, but by the people who live, work, volunteer, create and share their stories throughout the region.

Plantagenet is a place shaped by its striking natural landscapes, agricultural heritage, Aboriginal culture, local history and strong sense of community. Across the Shire, artists, volunteers, community groups, galleries, festivals, creative businesses and cultural organisations contribute to a vibrant and valued cultural life. Arts and culture help bring people together, foster belonging, strengthen local identity and create opportunities for people of all ages to connect with place and each other.

The engagement undertaken to inform this Strategy found strong community pride in Plantagenet's creative foundations and a shared aspiration to build a more visible, connected and vibrant cultural future. Residents highlighted the importance of supporting local artists, celebrating community stories, creating opportunities for young people, strengthening cultural representation, and making arts and cultural experiences more accessible to everyone.

This Strategy builds on those aspirations. It seeks to strengthen the foundations already in place while creating new opportunities for participation, collaboration and creative expression. Over the next five years, the Shire will work alongside community members, artists, Aboriginal people, volunteers, businesses and local organisations to nurture a creative ecosystem that reflects the unique character of Plantagenet.

Through this Strategy, the Shire aims to support a community where arts and culture are visible, valued and accessible; where local stories are celebrated; where creativity contributes to community wellbeing and economic vitality; and where future generations can continue to shape a distinctive and thriving cultural identity.

1.2 Why Arts and Culture Matter

Arts and culture are fundamental to healthy, connected and vibrant communities. Arts and culture have a multi-sector impact, contributing to a wide range of community, social, cultural and economic outcomes. They contribute to:

Community Wellbeing

Creative participation supports mental health, personal expression and quality of life. Arts and cultural experiences provide opportunities for enjoyment, learning and lifelong engagement.

Social Connection

Arts and culture bring people together, helping build relationships, reduce isolation and strengthen a sense of belonging across communities. Community connection emerged as one of the strongest priorities throughout engagement.

Local Identity and Pride

Arts and culture help communities celebrate what makes them unique. In Plantagenet, creativity is closely connected to the region's landscapes, heritage, agricultural traditions and Aboriginal culture.

Economic Development and Tourism

A thriving cultural sector supports local businesses, attracts visitors, creates opportunities for creative enterprise and contributes to the region's reputation as a distinctive destination. Economic and tourism benefits were identified as a key community priority.

Vibrant Places

Public art, events, festivals and creative activation transform everyday spaces into places where people gather, connect and experience community life.

Cultural Understanding and Inclusion

Arts and culture provide opportunities to share diverse stories, celebrate different perspectives and strengthen understanding between communities, generations and cultures.

Youth Development and Future Generations

Creating pathways for young people to connect, learn, develop skills and contribute to the future cultural life of the Shire.

What Do We Mean by Arts and Culture?

Arts and culture are the stories we tell, the traditions we share, the places we gather, and the creative ways we express who we are. They help shape Plantagenet's identity, strengthen community connections, and create a vibrant future for generations to come.



1.3 Purpose of the Arts and Culture Strategy 2026–2030

The Shire of Plantagenet Arts and Culture Strategy 2026-2030 is the first strategic framework developed to guide arts, culture and creativity across the region. This presents a significant opportunity to articulate a shared vision and establish a coordinated approach to cultural development.

The Strategy has four key purposes:



To Recognise

The creativity, talent, volunteer effort, cultural assets and community leadership that already contribute to Plantagenet's cultural life.



To Connect

People, organisations, places and opportunities across the Shire, creating a stronger and more visible cultural ecosystem.



To Support

Artists, creatives, community groups, cultural organisations and emerging initiatives through advocacy, partnerships, programming and strategic investment.

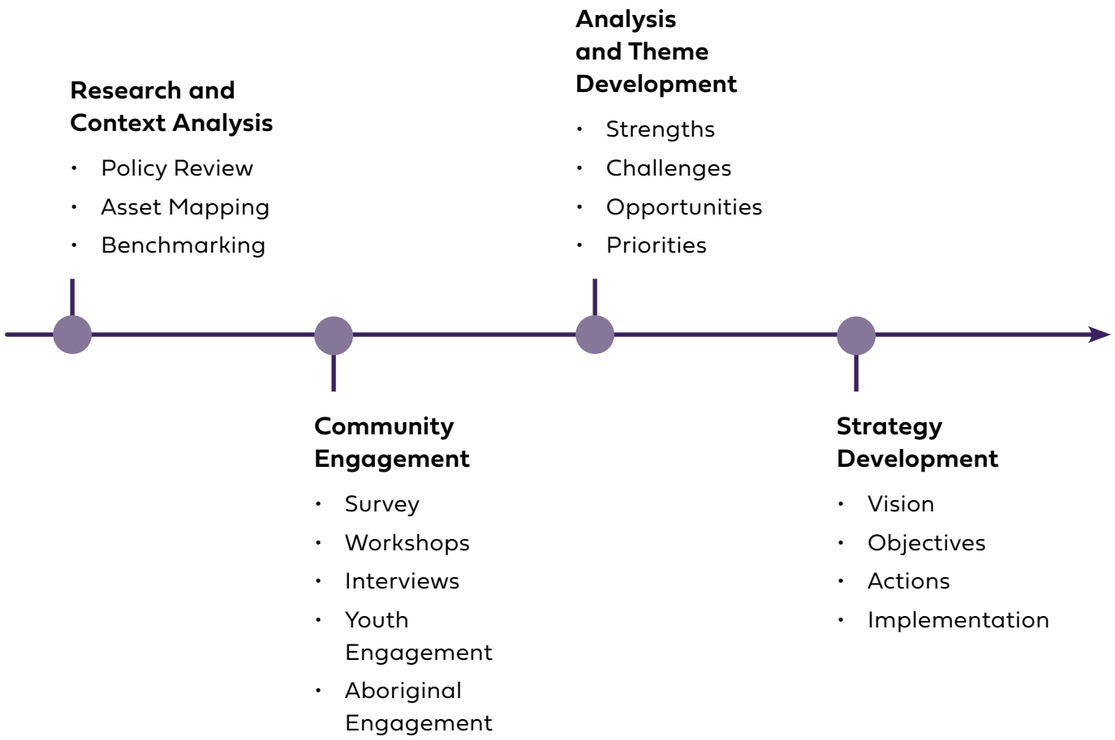


To Imagine

A future where arts and culture play an even greater role in community wellbeing, cultural identity, tourism, economic development and the ongoing vibrancy of Plantagenet.

2. Methodology

The Arts and Culture Strategy 2026-2030 was developed through a collaborative process that combined research, community engagement and strategic analysis. The methodology was designed to ensure the Strategy reflects the unique identity of Plantagenet, builds on existing strengths, and responds to the aspirations, challenges and opportunities identified by the community. The Strategy was developed during 2026 through four interconnected stages.



Research and Context Analysis

The first stage involved building an understanding of the arts, culture and creative landscape within Plantagenet. A literature review was undertaken to examine relevant local, regional, state and national strategies, policies and industry frameworks, alongside demographic information, arts sector trends and examples of best practice cultural planning. Existing cultural assets, community initiatives, heritage resources and creative organisations across the Shire's townsites were also reviewed to establish a baseline understanding of the local context.

Regional benchmarking and strategic alignment analysis were undertaken to identify opportunities for collaboration, investment and growth, while ensuring the Strategy responds to broader priorities influencing arts and culture development across Western Australia and the Great Southern region.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement was undertaken between April and June 2026 to understand community values, priorities and aspirations relating to arts and culture. The engagement program generated approximately 162 responses through a combination of surveys, workshops, interviews and targeted engagement activities. Included within the program were engagement opportunities for artists and creatives, the general community, Aboriginal community members, young people, community organisations, local businesses and cultural stakeholders.

This process provided valuable insight into what people value about Plantagenet's cultural identity, the role that arts and culture play within the community, existing strengths and achievements, barriers to participation, and aspirations for the future.

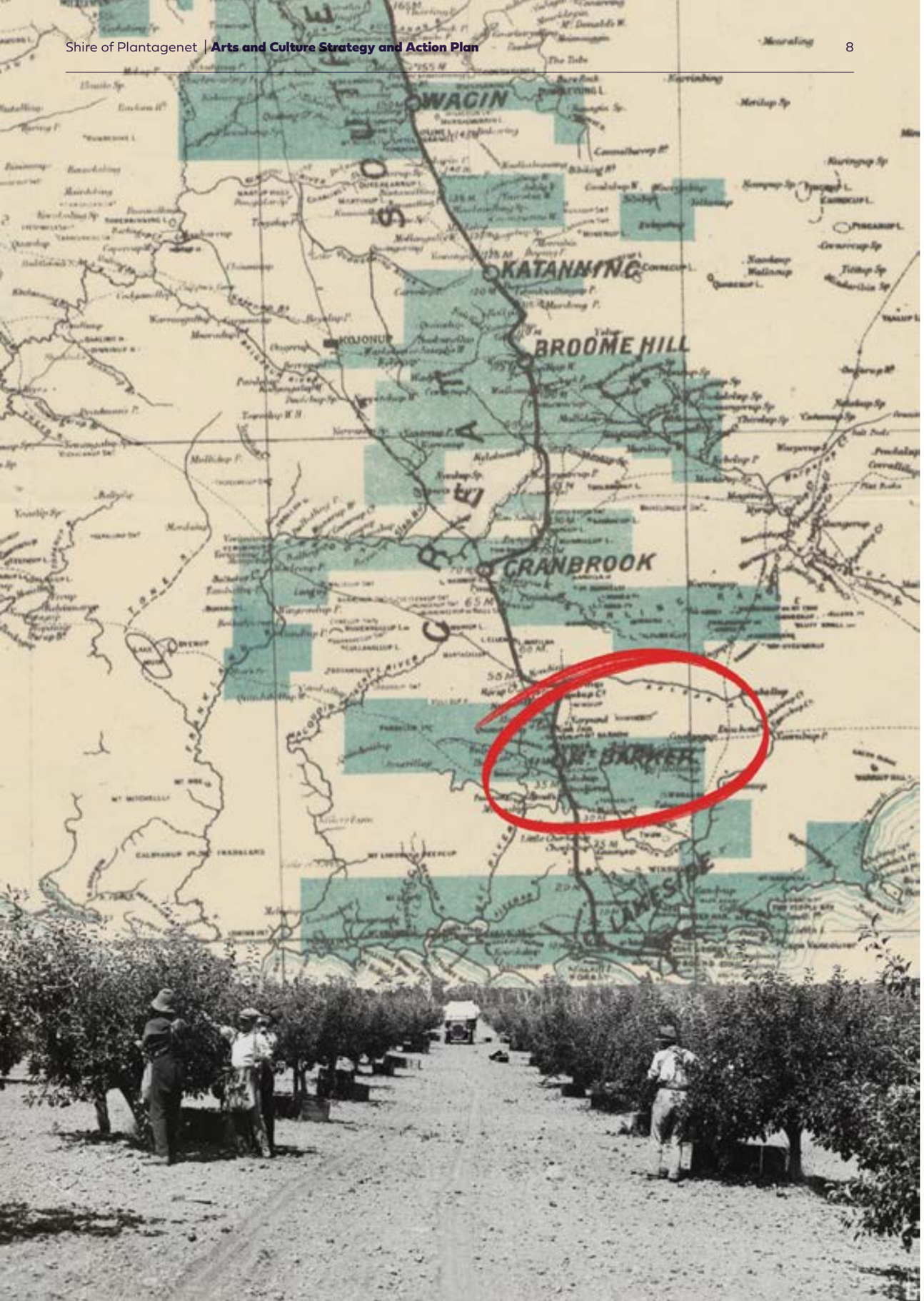
Analysis and Strategy Development

Research findings and engagement outcomes were analysed to identify recurring themes, priorities, opportunities and challenges. Several themes emerged consistently throughout the process, including community connection, support for local artists and volunteers, place activation, youth engagement, cultural representation, creative infrastructure, tourism and the importance of strengthening visibility and collaboration across the sector.

These findings informed the development of the Strategy's vision, strategic objectives and priority actions.

Refinement and Finalisation

The draft Strategy was developed through an iterative process involving review, discussion and refinement with the Shire project team. Feedback gathered through the engagement process, together with findings from the literature review and strategic analysis, was used to refine the Strategy and ensure it is grounded in local aspirations while remaining practical, achievable and responsive to future opportunities. The result is a strategic framework that provides direction for arts and culture development across the Shire over the next five years.



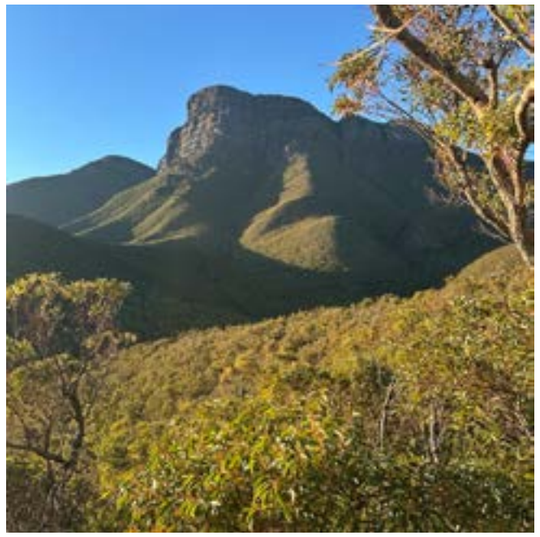
3. Plantagenet Today

3.1 Cultural background

3.1.1 Menang Noongar Country

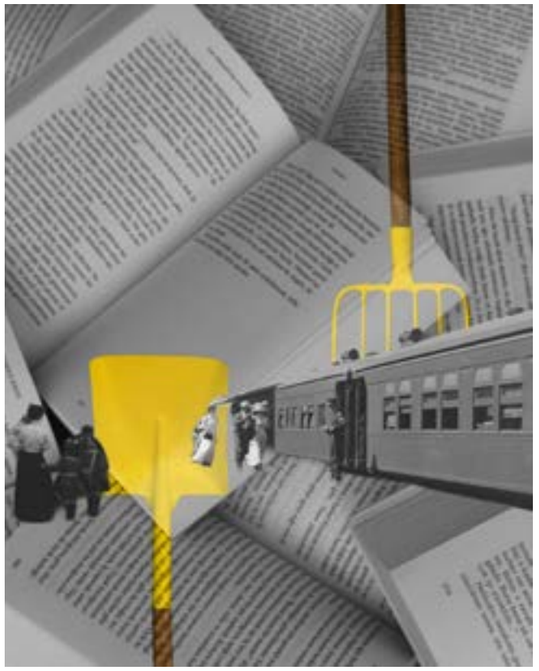
The Shire of Plantagenet is situated on Menang Noongar Country, a landscape that has been cared for, shaped and connected through countless generations of Aboriginal occupation. The enduring relationship between the Menang people and Country remains a fundamental part of the region's identity and cultural landscape. Understanding this connection is central to appreciating the history, stories, traditions and character of Plantagenet.

The region contains several culturally significant landscapes that hold deep meaning for Noongar people. The Porongurup Range is one of the most important cultural landscapes in the Great Southern, associated with Creation stories, ceremonial activity, travel routes. The Stirling Range is also recognised as a place of significant cultural and spiritual importance. The Menang and Goreng people are believed to have traditionally lived in and around the mountains, and many Creation stories reflect the mystery and significance of the rugged peaks. Bluff Knoll, known to Noongar people as *Bular Mial* (many eyes), is associated with an ancestral spirit whose presence is reflected in the distinctive rock formations visible on the mountain. Beyond these iconic landmarks, the broader Mount Barker area contains numerous Aboriginal heritage places, including artefact scatters, campsites and culturally significant landscapes that continue to reflect thousands of years of connection to Country.



The history of the region is also shaped by significant Menang people who have helped preserve, share and strengthen cultural knowledge across generations. Mokare (c.1800-1831) is widely recognised as one of the most important Menang leaders recorded during the early colonial period. Acting as a cultural intermediary between the Menang people and the first British settlers at King George Sound, he played a vital role in establishing relatively peaceful relationships during the earliest years of settlement. Wandinyil (Tommy King) (c.1810s-1880s) is remembered as one of the last Menang people to have experienced both pre-colonial and colonial life, providing an important historical link between traditional Menang society and the profound changes brought by European settlement. More recently, Carol Pettersen, a respected Menang Elder and cultural knowledge holder, has made significant contributions to preserving and sharing Menang history, language and stories.

3.1.2 Agricultural Heritage and Shared Histories



Plantagenet occupies a significant place in the history of Western Australia. As one of the State's earliest agricultural districts established following European Settlement, the region developed around farming, trade, community cooperation and strong connections to the land. Historically, the broader Plantagenet district extended beyond its current boundaries, including land all the way to the Indian ocean including the Albany settlement, before subsequent local government reorganisations created the municipalities that exist today.

Agriculture continues to shape the identity of the Shire, influencing its landscapes, economy, traditions and community life. Generations of farming families have contributed to the development of the region, creating a strong culture of resilience, hard work and mutual support.

Alongside this agricultural history is a rich and often overlooked story of relationships between Menang Noongar people and early European communities. Throughout the district, families, workplaces and communities have been connected through generations of shared experiences. Historian Murray Arnold described the Albany region as a "friendly frontier", arguing that early relations between Menang Aboriginal people and European settlers were "amicable to an extent perhaps without parallel in Australian frontier history" (Arnold, 2012). Menang leaders such as Mokare were instrumental in fostering understanding between cultures, sharing knowledge and helping newcomers understand and live within Country. These stories of cooperation, alongside the broader and more complex history of colonisation, remain an important part of the collective history of Plantagenet and the wider Great Southern region. Local stories speak of cooperation between farmers and Aboriginal workers, enduring friendships, and intercultural marriages that helped create enduring connections between Menang Noongar and European families. These histories continue to shape the social fabric of Plantagenet today and form an important part of the region's collective story.

3.2 Demographic Overview

The Shire of Plantagenet is a growing regional community. Population increased from 5,103 residents in 2016 to 5,534 residents in 2021 and approximately 5,793 residents in 2025. Population forecasts indicate continued growth, with the Shire expected to reach approximately 6,520 residents by 2036. Together with a 6.2% increase in family households between 2016 and 2021, these trends suggest Plantagenet continues to attract new residents seeking a regional lifestyle and strong sense of community.

Plantagenet has a mature age profile, with a median age of 48 years. Residents aged 40 years and over comprise more than 60% of the population, including almost one quarter of residents aged 65 years and over. The Shire's median age has increased in recent years, reflecting a broader ageing trend common across many regional communities.

At the same time, children, young people and families remain an important part of the community. Residents aged under 40 comprise almost 40% of the population, highlighting the importance of creating opportunities for participation across generations. Plantagenet is also becoming increasingly diverse, with migrant communities contributing to the cultural fabric of the region. This includes a significant Hazara community centred around Mount Barker, with 1.6% of residents born in Afghanistan and approximately 1.6% speaking Hazaraghi at home, as well as a growing Filipino community, with around 1% of residents born in the Phillippines. Together with continued population growth and increasing family numbers, these communities are helping to shape a diverse, evolving and welcoming region while strengthening the social and cultural fabric of the Shire.

Contrary to the population decline experienced by some regional communities, Plantagenet continues to grow and diversify. While the population is ageing, this trend is complemented by the arrival of new families and migrant communities, resulting in a community that is both established and renewing itself. This diversity of age, experience and cultural background is a significant strength, providing a strong foundation for cultural participation, community connection and creative exchange.

Population

5,388 (ABS 2021)

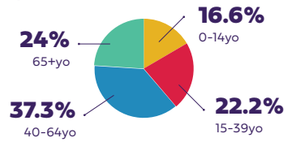
6,520 (2036 projected)

7.7% The ***population*** of the Shire of Plantagenet between 2019 and 2023

6.2% The number of ***families*** choosing the Shire as their home between 2016 and 2021

Median Age

48 years old



Indigenous Status

3.4% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Families

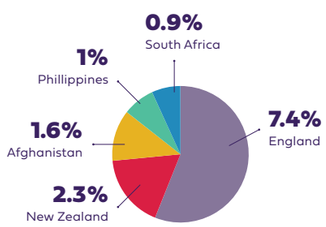
52.3% Couple family without Children

34.8% Couple family with Children (Average number of children per family 1.9)

12.1% One parent family

Country of Birth

19% overseas born



Industry

4.9% Sheep farming

3.4% Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle Farming

3.8% Beef cattle farming

3.3% Local Government Administration

3.7% Hospitals

3.3 A Strong Creative Foundation

3.3.1 A Place Shaped by Landscape, History and Community

Although this is the Shire's first Arts and Culture Strategy, arts and culture are already embedded in community life across Plantagenet. Creativity is not confined to traditional galleries or formal institutions. Instead, it is expressed through a network of artists, volunteers, community organisations, businesses and locally driven initiatives that bring culture into everyday spaces.

One of the Shire's most recognisable artistic expressions is the internationally renowned Walldogs mural collection. These large-scale artworks have transformed Mount Barker's streets into an open-air gallery, telling stories of local history, identity and place while contributing to the town's reputation as a cultural destination.

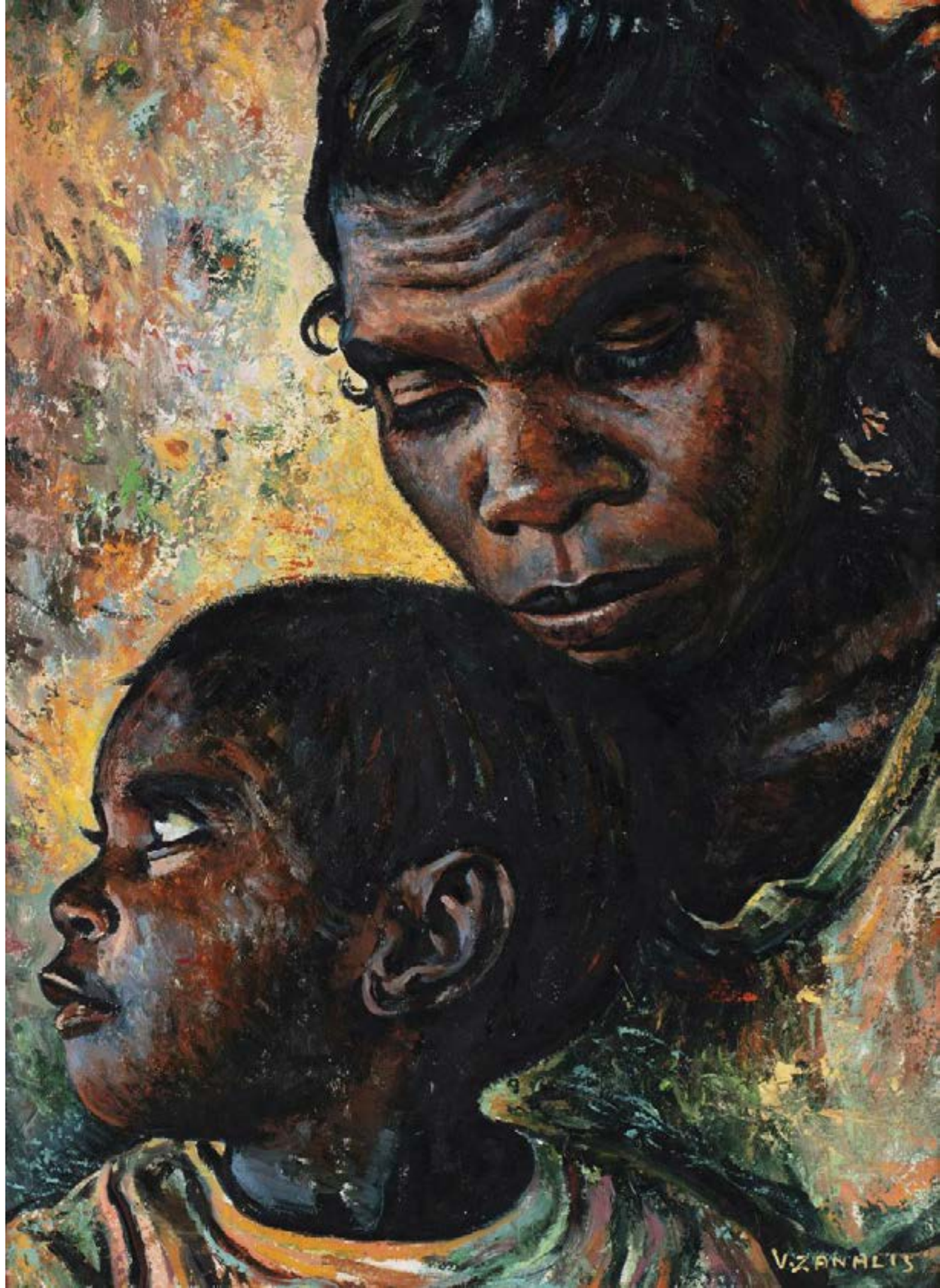
The creative spirit of Plantagenet is also evident in the way local spaces are adapted and repurposed for arts and culture. Mitchell House Arts Centre operates as a hub for artistic practice, learning and exhibitions. Lavender Bee provides access to an extensive range of creative materials and supplies while also supporting workshops, exhibitions and skill development opportunities for artists and makers of all ages and experience levels.

Across the Shire, artists have created opportunities for creative expression beyond conventional gallery settings. The artist-run Braidwood Art Studio, home to the Mountain Country Artists, combines working studio space with public exhibitions. Art Chatter, located within Strike Me Pink Garden and Gift Centre, demonstrates how retail and creative spaces can work together to support local artists through exhibitions, residencies and community engagement.

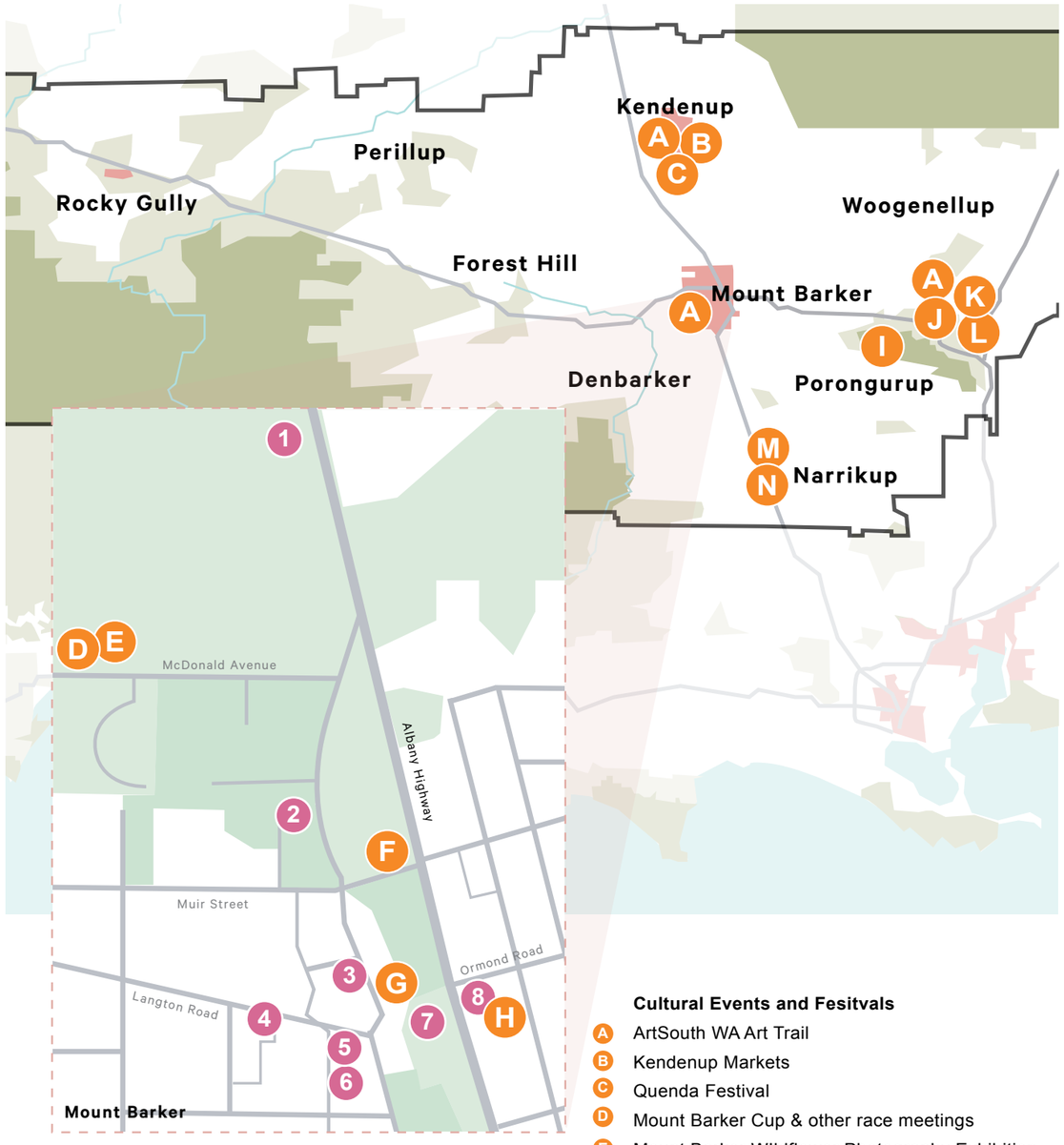


Public art and street art continue to play an important role in shaping the cultural identity of the Shire. During the development of this Strategy, local Noongar artist Charlie Colbung spoke about the role of art in bringing people together, sharing stories and fostering understanding across the community. His perspective reflects the broader role arts and culture can play in creating connections between people, strengthening community relationships and contributing to a shared sense of belonging.

Together, these people, places and initiatives demonstrate that Plantagenet possesses a strong creative foundation. From murals and galleries to studios, community spaces and creative businesses, arts and culture are woven into the social and cultural fabric of the Shire.



3.4 Existing Arts and Cultural Assets



Arts and Cultural Assets

1. Police Station and Museum
2. Mount Barker Library & Community Centre
3. Sobrane
4. Lavender Bee
5. Art Chatter
6. The Cheeky Parrot Gallery
7. Visitor Centre
8. Mitchell Arts Centre

Cultural Events and Fesitvals

- A ArtSouth WA Art Trail
- B Kendenup Markets
- C Quenda Festival
- D Mount Barker Cup & other race meetings
- E Mount Barker WIldflower Photography Exhibition
- F Plantagenet Players Productions
- G Mount Barker Markets
- H Plantagenet Art Prize
- I Black Fella White Fella Music Festival
- J Porongurup Swap Meet
- K Porongurup Snowball
- L Art in the Porongurup
- M Narrikup Amateur Theature Productions
- N Narrikup Annual Markets and Community Day

Beyond its galleries, studios, festivals and community organisations, the Shire is also custodian of one of the most significant local government art collections in regional Western Australia. Established through the generosity of renowned Western Australian arts patron Sir Claude Hotchin, the collection began in 1956 with the donation of more than 40 artworks and continued to grow through subsequent gifts until 1972. The collection was further strengthened through ad hoc acquisitions and the establishment of the annual Shire of Plantagenet Art Acquisition program in 1991. Today, the collection includes works by prominent Australian and Western Australian artists, including pieces by celebrated artist Isabella Kelly, and remains a remarkable cultural asset for a regional community.

While much of the collection is currently displayed across the Mount Barker Community Resource Centre, library and Shire offices, its significance extends well beyond its monetary value. The collection represents a living archive of artistic practice, regional cultural development and community investment in the arts, reflecting decades of commitment to making high-quality art accessible to local residents.

The collection complements a diverse network of cultural assets across the Shire, including the internationally recognised Walldogs murals, Mitchell House Arts Centre, The Cheeky Parrot Gallery, Art Chatter, Lavender Bee, the Plantagenet Players, the Mount Barker Wildflower Photography Exhibition, the Mitchell House Art Prize, Art in the Porongurup, artistically inclined local educators, community arts groups and creative practitioners working across painting, sculpture, photography, theatre and music.

Together, these assets demonstrate that Plantagenet possesses a significant cultural infrastructure and creative capital. The collection provides an opportunity to strengthen storytelling, heritage interpretation, tourism and cultural participation by connecting artworks with local stories, people and places. It also highlights the importance of investing in collection management, conservation and interpretation. Currently, opportunities exist to improve cataloguing, conservation, display conditions, lighting, rotation of works and professional curatorial oversight to ensure the collection remains accessible, well-maintained and relevant for future generations. Part of the Shire's challenge is ensuring that existing assets are connected, visible, celebrated and supported as part of a coherent cultural ecosystem.



3.5 Benchmarking



Manjimup

Arts and Culture Strategy:

- Arts & Culture Strategic Plan2013-2023

Major Arts Organisations

- Warren Arts Council
- Manjimup Arts Hub
- Southern Forest Arts

Festivals / Major Events

- Warren District agricultural Show
- Karri Valley Triathlon
- Dragon Tree
- Tarmac South West
- Delirious WEST 200 & 100 Miler
- Southern Forests and Valleys Heritage Festival
- Manjimup 15000
- WARC 2026 Karri Rally

Museums / Galleries

- Manjimup Art Gallery
- Northcliffe Pioneer Museum
- Painted Tree Gallery
- Power Up Electricity Museum
- State Timber Museum
- Steam Museum

Libraries

- Manjimup Public Library and Art Gallery

Theatres / Performance Spaces

- Manjimup Repertory Club

Workshops / Classes

- Manjimup Arts Hub workshops
- Pemberton Arts Group sessions
- Youth arts programs



Albany

Arts and Culture Strategy:

- Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan 2022–2027

Major Arts Organisations

- Albany Arts & Culture
- Vancouver Arts Group

Festivals / Major Events

- Albany Historical Society Art Exhibition
- Great Southern Art Award 2026
- Harmony Festival
- Bushcare Busy Bee
- WA Tree Festival
- PortFest

Museums / Galleries

- Museum of Surfing
- Albany Convict Gaol Museum
- Old Gaol Museum
- Museum of the Great Southern
- Patrick Taylor Cottage Museum
- Hotchin Gallery
- Grasstree Gallery

Libraries

- Albany Public Library

Theatres / Performance Spaces

- Albany Town Hall
- The Shed
- Albany Entertainment Centre

Workshops / Classes

- Artist residencies; workshops at VAC & Town Hall; public art workshops



Denmark

Arts and Culture Strategy:

- Great Southern Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022

Major Arts Organisations

- Denmark Arts

Festivals / Major Events

- Volunteer @ the Native Plant Nursery
- Denmark Community Garden Events
- Permaculture and Garden Tours

Museums / Galleries

- Denmark Historical Museum
- Wynella
- Butter Factory Studios
- Riverfront Gallery
- Mill Art Group Inc
- Denmark Arts

Libraries

- Denmark Public Library

Theatres / Performance Spaces

- Denmark Arts

Workshops / Classes

- Denmark Arts workshops across music, visual arts, puppetry, etc.



Cranbrook

Arts and Culture Strategy:

- No Arts and Culture Strategy
- Council Plan 2025-2035 supports seeking opportunities to support local arts and culture

Major Arts Organisations

- Cranbrook Arts
- Cranbrook Community Theatre

Festivals / Major Events

- Cranbrook Show
- Youth Music Workshop
- Community Rock Concert

Museums / Galleries

- Cranbrook Museum

Libraries

- Cranbrook Library
- Frankland River Library

Theatres / Performance Spaces

- n/a

Workshops / Classes

- Cranbrook Arts workshops (pottery, mixed media, seniors art, youth art)



Gnowangerup

Arts and Culture Strategy:

- No Arts and Culture Strategy
- Shire of Gnowangerup Integrated Strategic Plan 2021-2030 has as one of its Strategic Priorities, events, arts and cultural activities

Major Arts Organisations

- Gnowangerup Arts & Crafts
- Great Southern Creative Art Centre
- Gnowangerup Theatre Group
- Gnowangerup Music Club
- * Not major organisations

Festivals / Major Events

- Dandjoo Day
- Wild Gravel 2026

Museums / Galleries

- Jirrahlinga Gallery & Studio
- Blackwood River Art & Craft
- * Both are galleries that showcase the works of local artists and craft people including, pottery, painting, sculpture, woodwork, etc.

Libraries

- Gnowangerup Library
- Ongerup Library

Theatres / Performance Spaces

- n/a

Workshops / Classes

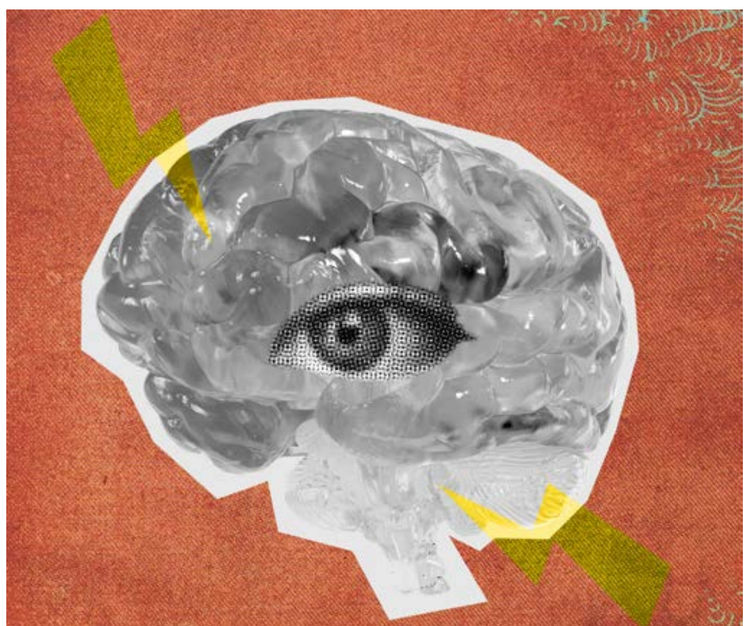
- Borden Pavillion hosts photography workshops
- Ongerup CRC hosts craft workshops

3.5.1 Key insights

Review of neighbouring and comparable regional local governments identified several consistent approaches to strengthening arts and culture. Communities with strong arts and cultural outcomes typically:

- Invest in a clear place-based cultural identity.
- Support local arts organisations and volunteer groups.
- Deliver a diverse range of workshops, exhibitions, events and festivals.
- Use arts and culture to complement tourism, heritage and economic development objectives.
- Provide accessible spaces for creative participation and community gathering.
- Build partnerships across organisations and neighbouring local governments.

The benchmarking highlighted that Plantagenet already possesses many of the cultural assets found in comparable communities, including galleries, artists, public art, heritage assets, festivals and active community organisations. The opportunity for Plantagenet is not necessarily to replicate neighbouring communities, but to build on its unique strengths.



4. Stakeholder Engagement



Community engagement was undertaken in April-June 2026, and November-December 2026 to inform the development of the Shire of Plantagenet Arts and Culture Strategy 2026-2030. The engagement program was designed to understand community aspirations, identify strengths and challenges within the local arts and cultural landscape, and ensure the Strategy reflects the voices of those who live, work and create within the Shire.

The engagement process sought input from a diverse cross-section of the community, including artists, creatives, community organisations, volunteers, young people, Aboriginal community members, businesses, cultural stakeholders and the broader community. Particular focus was placed on ensuring opportunities existed for participation from groups whose voices are under-represented in traditional consultation processes.

Activity	Purpose	Participation
Community Survey 1	Understand community values, priorities and aspirations	73 responses (46 online, 27 paper surveys)
General Community Workshop	Explore perceptions of arts, culture and community identity	5 participants
Artists and Creatives Workshop	Identify opportunities, barriers and sector needs	15 participants
Aboriginal Community Engagement	Understand cultural priorities, aspirations and opportunities	4 attendees (3 active participants)
Youth Engagement	Capture perspectives of young people	65 student responses (61 Mount Barker Community College, 4 Kendenup Primary School)
Stakeholder Interviews	Gather insights from key organisations and community leaders	7 interviews (Mitchell House Arts Centre, Braidwood Art Studio, Lavender Bee, Art Chatter, Charlie Colbung, Great Southern Development Commission and the Plantagenet Historical Society)
Community Outreach Activities	Engage broader sections of the community	Pop-up boards at Mount Barker IGA and Library, targeted comms to Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities including the Afghan community.
Community Survey 2	Test overall support for the draft Strategy. Rank or prioritise actions.	TBC
Community Drop-in Session	Test and refine the draft Strategy. Rank or prioritise actions.	TBC
Presentation to elected members	Test overall support for the draft Strategy.	TBC

4.1 Key Engagement Questions

Engagement activities explored:

- What makes Plantagenet unique?
- What role do arts and culture currently play in community life?
- What cultural strengths should be celebrated and supported?
- What barriers limit participation and creative development?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen arts and culture across the Shire?
- What should the future of arts and culture in Plantagenet look like?



4.2 Key Engagement Findings



Theme 1: A Strong Sense of Place

Plantagenet has a strong identity and remarkable assets, but many of them are not yet visible or connected through a cohesive place story.

Participants consistently described Plantagenet as a place shaped by its natural environment, agricultural heritage and strong community spirit. The Porongurup and Stirling Ranges, productive farming landscapes, local history and public art were frequently referenced as defining features of the region's identity. Participants highlighted a wide range of cultural and natural assets that contribute to local pride, including the internationally recognised Walldogs murals, local galleries and studios, renowned artists and writers, significant historical collections, unique biodiversity, and the region's strong food and wine culture.

Many participants reflected on the depth and diversity of experiences available within the Shire. Examples included the region's rich heritage, internationally significant Banksia collections, creative enterprises, wineries and natural attractions. While these assets support a diverse range of interests and lifestyles, there was a perception that they are not always visible to visitors. Participants noted that many travellers either pass through Mount Barker on their way to other destinations or stop briefly for well-known attractions without fully appreciating the broader range of cultural, creative and nature-based experiences the region has to offer.

Community members expressed a strong desire to celebrate and share local stories, recognising arts and culture as important tools for strengthening place identity, building community pride and communicating what makes Plantagenet special to both residents and visitors. Creativity, nature, heritage and community were widely seen as interconnected elements of the Shire's identity.

65 young people participated in the engagement process, with youth-friendly spaces identified as their highest priority for investment.

Theme 2: A Hidden but Vibrant Creative Community

The challenge is not a lack of creativity, but an over-reliance on a small number of people and the absence of broader systems to support, connect and sustain what already exists.

Engagement revealed a thriving network of artists, makers, volunteers, creative businesses and community organisations operating throughout the Shire. Participants pointed to spaces such as Mitchell House Arts Centre, Cheeky Parrot Gallery, Lavender Bee, Art Chatter Gallery and Braidwood Art Studio as examples of the strong creative foundations already present within the community. Public art, markets, music festivals, workshops and informal creative gatherings were also highlighted as valuable parts of Plantagenet's cultural life.

Despite these strengths, many participants felt that Plantagenet's creative community remains relatively invisible, with much of the activity occurring quietly and often going unnoticed beyond existing networks. A recurring observation was that a relatively small group of artists, volunteers and community champions are responsible for driving many of the Shire's creative activities and organisations. While this reflects a highly committed and passionate community, it also highlights concerns regarding capacity constraints and long-term sustainability.

Participants shared several examples of volunteer-led achievements that demonstrate the strength of local commitment. One example frequently referenced was the development of significant archival and heritage facilities within the local museum and history centre, delivered largely through volunteer effort and grant funding. While these initiatives were widely celebrated, participants noted that many rely on a small number of dedicated individuals and face



challenges relating to succession planning, ongoing resourcing and long-term activation.

Overall, participants recognised that Plantagenet possesses considerable cultural assets, creative talent and community goodwill. However, there was a strong perception that these strengths are not yet fully connected, coordinated or promoted. Greater visibility, stronger partnerships between groups, broader participation and increased recognition of existing activity were consistently identified as opportunities to build a more resilient and sustainable cultural ecosystem.

Artists identified local artists, studios, creative groups, etc. 24 times when mapping their strongest sector connections.

Highest priorities for arts and culture investment for survey respondents:

1. Supporting emerging artists
2. Strengthening community connection
3. Driving local economic and tourism opportunities

Theme 3: Arts and Culture Bring People Together

Participants viewed arts and culture not only as creative pursuits, but as important tools for social cohesion. While issues relating to inclusion and belonging remain present within parts of the community, there is strong belief that arts and culture can help build bridges between people and create a stronger sense of connection across the Shire.

Participants consistently described arts and culture as powerful mechanisms for bringing people together. Creative activities, events, exhibitions, public art projects and community programs were viewed as opportunities to strengthen social connections, reduce isolation and foster a sense of belonging across the Shire. Many participants valued arts and culture not only for their creative outcomes, but also for their ability to create shared experiences and build relationships between people who might not otherwise connect.

Several participants highlighted the role arts and culture could play in strengthening relationships between different generations, cultures and communities. At the same time, engagement revealed a number of existing challenges relating to inclusion and participation. Participants described experiences of unequal treatment, limited feelings of welcome or acceptance, and barriers to participation across a variety of community settings, including schools, hobby groups, cultural organisations and formal community forums. These issues were not always directly related to arts and culture, but were recognised as factors that influence who participates and who feels they belong.

Community members also spoke about challenges that exist within and between groups, including divisions that can affect engagement and participation. Participants noted that building stronger connections



across communities requires more than simply providing activities; it requires creating spaces where people feel safe, respected and valued. In this context, arts and culture were frequently identified as potential tools for dialogue, storytelling and relationship building.

Stories shared during engagement emphasised the potential for creative activities to support understanding, cultural exchange and community harmony. Participants expressed a desire to see arts and culture play a greater role in fostering connection, celebrating diversity and creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds and experiences to come together around shared interests and stories.

Youth Voices

"A club where people can go and be theirselves where no one can judge them for who they are and what they like."

"A big shed with pool tables, food and drink bar, bean bags with video games and all sorts of games."



Theme 4: Inclusion and Belonging

The challenge is not a lack of creativity, but an over-reliance on a small number of people and the absence of broader systems to support, connect and sustain what already exists.

While Plantagenet was widely recognised as a welcoming community, participants also identified significant barriers to participation and belonging. Aboriginal participants spoke about feeling overlooked and expressed a desire for greater cultural recognition, stronger representation and more opportunities to share culture. Young people similarly described feeling underserved and called for activities, spaces and decision-making processes that better reflect their interests and aspirations.

Participants also identified challenges relating to cultural diversity, community inclusion and social cohesion. Some community members described experiences of exclusion, unequal treatment or difficulties accessing established community networks. Others pointed to tensions within and between community groups that could affect participation. There was strong support for initiatives that celebrate diversity, foster cultural exchange and ensure a wider range of voices are represented in community life.

> ***"Building of trust. It is not a thing money can fix. It needs work by dedicated people. It needs groups to be more inclusive."***
> Participant quote

> ***"Mount Barker embraces multicultural communities"***
> Participant quote when asked to imagine a headline for the future of Plantagenet



Theme 5: Creative Infrastructure and Support Matter

The challenge facing arts and culture in Plantagenet is not a lack of creativity or commitment, but the need for stronger systems, skills, support and succession planning to sustain and grow what already exists.

Many participants felt that the greatest barriers facing arts and culture in Plantagenet were structural rather than creative. The Shire was seen as having talented artists, active volunteers, successful creative enterprises and strong community interest, but insufficient support systems to help these strengths flourish. Commonly identified needs included access to exhibition and studio spaces, gathering places, funding opportunities, professional development, mentoring and stronger networks within the creative sector.

Participants highlighted a number of practical barriers that limit participation and growth. For some artists and community groups, challenges included navigating grant processes, accessing funding, developing digital skills and promoting their work to broader audiences. Several participants noted that many of the Shire's active contributors are older volunteers and artists who have built significant expertise and community assets over many years but often face challenges adapting to increasingly digital platforms, marketing tools and online sales channels.

There was also concern about volunteer burnout and succession planning, with many organisations relying on a small number of dedicated individuals. Participants cited examples of significant community-led achievements, including heritage and archival facilities developed through volunteer effort and grant funding, which demonstrate the commitment and capability that exists within the community. However, concerns were raised about the long-term sustainability of these initiatives where knowledge, leadership and responsibility are concentrated among a small number of people.

Participants emphasised the need to build capacity and create pathways for broader participation in cultural leadership and delivery. Strengthening skills, partnerships, knowledge-sharing and support networks was viewed as equally important as investing in physical infrastructure, helping ensure Plantagenet's creative sector remains resilient, connected and sustainable into the future.



Theme 6: A Coherent Experience

Plantagenet does not lack experiences; it lacks the connective tissue that helps people discover, navigate and engage with them as part of a broader story of place.

Participants identified a remarkable range of cultural, creative, heritage and nature-based experiences across the Shire. From artist studios and galleries to public art, walking trails, wineries, heritage attractions, workshops and community events, Plantagenet offers a depth and diversity of experiences that contribute to its identity and appeal.

However, participants felt these experiences often operate independently rather than as part of a connected journey. While individual destinations and activities are highly valued, there was a perception that residents and visitors are not always aware of the breadth of opportunities available across the Shire. Participants noted that many people travel through the region on their way to Albany without discovering the range of cultural, creative and nature-based experiences on offer.

Many participants expressed a desire for stronger connections between existing assets, creating opportunities for people to experience the Shire more holistically. Examples included connecting workshops with retail opportunities, integrating arts experiences with food, wine and heritage attractions, and encouraging exploration of the region's unique landscapes and biodiversity. Arts and culture were seen as important mechanisms for connecting these experiences and strengthening people's understanding of place.

Participants believed there is significant opportunity to better curate and communicate the Plantagenet experience, helping people discover what already exists rather than focusing solely on creating new attractions. A more connected experience was seen as a way to strengthen community pride, support artists and local businesses, and encourage people to spend more time engaging with the Shire.



Theme 7: Arts and Culture Can Strengthen Tourism and Economic Development

Arts and culture are not only community assets; they are economic assets. Better connecting creative activity with tourism, local business and destination development presents a significant opportunity to strengthen both the cultural and economic vitality of Plantagenet.

Participants recognised arts and culture as important contributors to the local economy and visitor experience. Existing assets such as the Walldogs murals, galleries, creative businesses, wineries, markets, heritage attractions and natural landscapes were seen as providing strong foundations for cultural tourism and economic activity. Many participants felt Plantagenet already possesses the ingredients of a distinctive visitor destination, with arts and culture adding depth and character to the region's broader tourism offer.

Participants highlighted opportunities to strengthen the links between arts, culture, food and wine, heritage, nature-based experiences and local businesses. Artists, makers and creative enterprises were seen not only as contributors to community life, but also as important participants in the local economy through workshops, exhibitions, events, commissions, tourism experiences and retail sales. There was a strong desire to support local creatives in ways that enable them to build sustainable practices and contribute more visibly to the region's economic development.

Many participants felt that arts and culture represent an underutilised economic asset. While the region attracts visitors for its landscapes, wineries, etc., there was a perception that the creative sector has the potential to further extend visitor stays, encourage local spending and diversify the visitor experience. Participants saw opportunities to better integrate creative experiences into the broader tourism economy and strengthen Plantagenet's reputation as a place to experience art, culture, and heritage alongside its natural attractions.

There was broad support for recognising arts and culture as contributors to local business development and place attractiveness. Participants viewed investment in arts and culture not only as a community benefit, but also as a catalyst for visitation, economic activity and the long-term vibrancy of the Shire.

15.9% of respondents ranked tourism and economic development as their highest arts and culture priority.



5. Issues and Opportunities

The engagement process highlighted a vibrant and committed arts and cultural community, alongside a number of challenges that currently limit participation, visibility and growth. Together, these findings present a set of opportunities that can guide future investment and action.

These opportunities provide the foundation for the Arts and Culture Strategy 2026-2030. The following vision and strategic framework respond directly to the aspirations, challenges and opportunities identified through community engagement and research, providing a roadmap for the future development of arts and culture across the Shire.

Issue	Opportunity
Identity and Place	
Plantagenet possesses a distinctive identity shaped by Menang Noongar Country, agricultural heritage, creative talent, biodiversity, heritage assets and iconic landscapes. However, many of these stories are not connected through a shared narrative and are often experienced as individual attractions rather than part of a broader story of place.	Arts and culture can strengthen place identity through storytelling, interpretation, creative programs and public art. There is an opportunity to connect the Shire's cultural, natural and heritage assets into a more coherent experience that encourages both residents and visitors to discover and engage more deeply with Plantagenet.
Visibility and Connection	
While Plantagenet has a vibrant network of artists, volunteers, organisations and creative businesses, much of the activity occurs quietly and remains relatively invisible beyond existing networks. Many initiatives operate independently, with limited opportunities to connect with artists, organisations and audiences outside the Shire. Participants noted that local creative achievements, events and assets are often not recognised beyond immediate community circles.	There is an opportunity to strengthen connections within the local creative community and across the wider Great Southern region. Participants identified potential benefits from building stronger relationships with neighbouring creative centres such as Albany and Denmark, participating in regional networks, sharing programs and resources, and creating pathways for local artists and organisations to access broader audiences. Raising the profile of Plantagenet's creative community can help attract new participants, strengthen local capacity and expand opportunities for collaboration, learning and cultural exchange.

Issue	Opportunity
Civic and cultural anchor for the Shire	
Creative, heritage, tourism and visitor experiences are dispersed across multiple locations, making it difficult for residents and visitors to discover and engage with the full breadth of what Plantagenet offers. Current facilities each play important roles but are often experienced independently rather than as part of a connected cultural ecosystem.	There is an opportunity to explore a civic and cultural anchor that brings together visitor information, local stories, cultural interpretation, creative activity and community gathering functions. Whether through a new facility, a redeveloped existing site or a networked hub model, cultural infrastructure could provide a central gateway to the Shire's arts, heritage, biodiversity, food and wine, and nature-based experiences while supporting exhibitions, workshops, events and visitor orientation.
Inclusion and Belonging	
While Plantagenet is widely recognised as a welcoming community, participants identified ongoing challenges relating to inclusion, representation and participation. Aboriginal participants, young people and some culturally diverse communities reported feeling overlooked or underserved within parts of community life. Engagement also highlighted broader social and cultural barriers that can affect participation, belonging and community cohesion. These issues extend beyond the arts and cultural sector and reflect wider community development challenges.	Addressing these challenges will require coordinated action across multiple areas of community life, including community development, education, recreation, youth services and cultural programming. Arts and culture cannot solve these issues alone; however, they can provide valuable platforms for connection, storytelling, cultural exchange and relationship-building. Working alongside broader community development initiatives, arts and culture can help create opportunities for people from different backgrounds, generations and experiences to participate, share stories and build stronger connections with one another. There is also an opportunity to create more youth-focused creative pathways, leadership opportunities and activities that enable young people to contribute to, shape and participate in the cultural life of the Shire.

Issue	Opportunity
Creative Infrastructure, Capacity and Sustainability	
Many cultural initiatives rely on a small group of highly committed artists, volunteers and community leaders. While this passion is a significant strength, concerns were raised regarding volunteer burnout, succession planning, funding challenges, digital capability and long-term sustainability. The challenge facing the sector is often not a lack of creativity, but a lack of support systems, resources and capacity.	There is an opportunity to strengthen the capacity and resilience of Plantagenet's creative community through targeted skills development, mentoring and support. Participants highlighted the need for greater confidence and capability in areas such as grant writing, project management, marketing, social media, digital platforms, online sales, audience development and emerging technologies. Supporting artists, volunteers and community organisations to adapt to new tools, including artificial intelligence and digital content creation, could help improve visibility, reduce barriers to participation and create new opportunities for creative and economic growth. At the same time, investing in leadership development, succession planning and knowledge sharing can help ensure that community knowledge, volunteer effort and cultural assets remain sustainable into the future. There is also an opportunity to improve access to creative spaces, facilities and infrastructure that support artistic practice, learning, collaboration and community participation.
Disconnected Experiences	
Many of Plantagenet's cultural, heritage, tourism and creative experiences operate as standalone attractions rather than as part of a connected and easily navigable visitor and community experience.	Plantagenet offers a rich mix of arts, culture, heritage, food and wine, nature-based experiences and community attractions. However, these experiences are often promoted and experienced independently, limiting opportunities for residents and visitors to discover the full depth of what the Shire offers.
Tourism and Economic Development	
Arts and culture contribute to Plantagenet's identity, visitor experience and local economy, but their full potential is not yet being realised. Creative enterprises, artists, events and cultural experiences often operate independently rather than as part of a broader visitor economy.	Greater integration between arts, culture, tourism, food and wine, heritage and nature-based experiences could strengthen visitation, support local businesses and increase economic opportunities for artists and creatives. Arts and culture have the potential to enhance both the economic vitality and liveability of the Shire.



6. Strategic Framework

Plantagenet's arts and cultural landscape is shaped by strong creative foundations, a distinctive sense of place, passionate volunteers, rich cultural and natural assets, and a growing and diverse community. The issues and opportunities identified through research and engagement highlight the need to strengthen connections, support capacity building, foster inclusion, celebrate local identity and realise the broader social and economic benefits of arts and culture. Together, these insights have informed the vision and strategic objectives that will guide arts and culture development across the Shire over the next five years.

6.1 Vision

"A connected and inclusive Plantagenet, where stories, culture, heritage and nature inspire a vibrant creative future for all."

Plantagenet is a place where creativity is woven into everyday life; where local stories are celebrated, diverse voices are welcomed, artists and communities are supported, and arts and culture contribute to community wellbeing, economic opportunity and a strong sense of place.

6.2 Strategic Objectives

The Strategic Objectives provide the framework for achieving the Strategy's vision and respond to the key themes identified through community engagement, research and benchmarking. Collectively, they support a stronger sense of place, increased participation and inclusion, a more connected and resilient creative community, and greater cultural, social and economic outcomes for the Shire. These objectives reflect the unique strengths, opportunities and aspirations of Plantagenet while providing a clear foundation for implementation.

The objectives also align closely with the priorities identified in the Great Southern Region Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy and Creative WA. In particular, they support the Great Southern Strategy's focus on Cultural Identity, Experience, and Capacity and Investment, while responding to Creative WA priorities relating to First Nations culture and storytelling, place identity, creative ecosystems and artist support, participation, accessibility and inclusion, and audience growth, activation and cultural tourism.



Objective 1 – Celebrate Place and Identity

Celebrate the stories, landscapes, heritage and cultural traditions that make Plantagenet unique while strengthening connections to Menang Noongar Country and fostering a stronger sense of place.

Role of the Shire:

- Champion local identity and storytelling
- Promote cultural heritage and creativity
- Support recognition of Menang Noongar culture

Priority Actions:

- Develop a Heritage Interpretation Strategy for the Shire
- Establish a fund for public art
- Develop and promote local and Menang Noongar storytelling initiatives
- Undertake cultural mapping to identify, document and promote the Shire's cultural and heritage assets.
- Support and facilitate place-based creative projects that reflect local identity and strengthen community connection.



Objective 2 – Strengthen and Connect the Creative Community

Support artists, creatives, volunteers and organisations through stronger networks, partnerships, collaboration and visibility both within the Shire and across the Great Southern region.

Role of the Shire:

- Connect artists, organisations and communities
- Facilitate collaboration and partnerships
- Promote local artists and creative activity

Priority Actions:

- Establish a regular Plantagenet Creative Network Forum to strengthen connections.
- Facilitate regional partnerships to support partnerships across the Great Southern.
- Develop and maintain a Local Creative Directory to improve visibility.
- Support artist showcases, exchanges and collaborative projects to build networks.
- Establish artist residency opportunities that attract visitors and contribute to cultural exchange.



Objective 3 – Foster Inclusion, Belonging and Cultural Exchange

Use arts and culture as tools for participation, connection and cultural understanding while creating opportunities for under-represented voices, including Aboriginal people, young people and culturally diverse communities, to contribute to and shape community life.

Role of the Shire:

- Engage a community development consultant
- Reduce barriers to engagement
- Partner with under-represented communities

Priority Actions:

- Support youth creative programs that encourage participation and skills development.
- Support Aboriginal cultural programs that celebrate, share and strengthen cultural knowledge.
- Facilitate intercultural events that promote cultural exchange and understanding
- Support community arts projects that encourage collaboration and participation.
- Create creative leadership opportunities for under-represented groups to build confidence and community influence.



Objective 4 – Build Capacity and Future Readiness

Strengthen the skills, leadership, infrastructure and support systems needed for arts and culture to flourish, including digital capability, succession planning, creative entrepreneurship and volunteer sustainability.

Role of the Shire:

- Build capacity across the creative sector
- Support volunteers, artists and organisations
- Enable skills development and innovation

Priority Actions:

- Provide grant support and funding guidance to help artists, creatives and community organisations
- Facilitate professional development opportunities that build skills and knowledge.
- Support digital capability including social media, marketing and online sales.
- Build awareness and capability in AI and digital content creation.
- Support succession planning and volunteer development to strengthen the sustainability of community organisations.



Objective 5 – Create Experiences and Opportunities

Curate and connect arts, culture, heritage, food, wine and nature-based experiences into a cohesive Plantagenet story that encourages residents and visitors to discover, explore and engage more deeply with the Shire.

Role of the Shire:

- Promote cultural tourism and visitation
- Support placemaking and activation
- Facilitate partnerships and investment

Priority Actions:

- Develop and promote a coordinated arts, culture, heritage and place-based experience program.
- Develop cultural trails linking arts, heritage, nature, food and wine experiences
- Explore opportunities for a cultural and visitor gateway that showcases the region's stories and creative identity.
- Develop a gallery and studio trail to increase visibility and visitation to local artists and creative enterprises.
- Support arts and cultural tourism initiatives that encourage visitors to stop, stay and explore.
- Deliver creative activations that animate public spaces and enhance community experiences.
- Establish artist residency opportunities that attract visitors, support creative development and contribute to cultural exchange.

7. Action Plan

Progress will be reviewed annually through reporting against the Action Plan. The Action Plan should remain flexible to respond to emerging opportunities and changing community needs.

The Strategy should be reviewed periodically to assess progress, identify emerging opportunities and inform future cultural planning. A comprehensive review should occur prior to the development of the next Arts and Culture Strategy.

The Shire recognises that Aboriginal culture is best represented, shared and led by Aboriginal people. The Shire's role is to support Aboriginal-led initiatives, facilitate partnerships, respond to community priorities and create opportunities for cultural knowledge and stories to be shared where appropriate. Actions relating to Aboriginal culture, storytelling and participation should be undertaken in partnership with Menang Elders, Aboriginal organisations and community members, with priorities and delivery approaches guided by Aboriginal communities.

To support realistic and achievable implementation, actions have been grouped into three tiers based on the Shire's role, resource requirements and delivery partnerships. The tiered approach provides a practical pathway for delivery, allowing the Shire to establish strong foundations first, build partnerships, and pursue larger opportunities as capacity, funding and community support grow.

- **Tier 1** actions are core initiatives led by the Shire that establish the foundations for future investment and delivery.
- **Tier 2** actions are delivered collaboratively with community organisations, regional bodies, tourism operators and cultural partners.
- **Tier 3** actions represent longer-term opportunities that may be pursued as funding, partnerships and capacity allow.

7.1 Tier 1 Foundational Actions

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
1.	**Undertake cultural mapping to identify, document and promote the Shire's cultural and heritage assets.**	Identify, document and map cultural, heritage and Aboriginal assets across the Shire before the knowledge is lost, to inform future planning, tourism development, promotion and investment.	Cultural mapping is identified in regional guidance as an important activity and provides the baseline evidence needed for heritage promotion, tourism development, storytelling initiatives, investment planning and future grant applications.	High	Short	• Menang Elders and community members • Mt Barker Museum and History Centre • Mt Barker Visitor Centre • Community groups • Local schools • ArtSouthWA	• Cultural mapping completed and publicly accessible • Minimum 100 assets documented • Mapping informs at least 3 future projects, grant applications or tourism initiatives
2.	**Establish a regular Plantagenet Creative Network Forum to strengthen connections.**	Create a regular networking and information-sharing forum for artists, creatives, community organisations, businesses and stakeholders.	Engagement identified a need for stronger collaboration, communication and coordination across the local creative sector. A regular network forum will bring together artists, community groups, businesses and the Shire to foster partnerships, share knowledge and strengthen advocacy for arts and culture.	High	Short	• Local artists and creatives • Community groups • Creative businesses • Great Southern Development Commission • ArtSouthWA	• Minimum 2 forums delivered annually • Participation from a diverse range of creative stakeholders and businesses • Evidence of new partnerships or collaborative projects emerging
3.	**Develop and maintain a Local Creative Directory to improve visibility.**	Create and regularly update an online and/or printed directory of artists, creative businesses, groups, venues and cultural organisations.	Engagement highlighted the need for better promotion of local artists, creative businesses and cultural activities. A creative directory will increase visibility, support networking, improve access to opportunities, and help residents and visitors engage with Plantagenet's creative sector.	High	Short	• Local artists and creatives • Community organisations • Visitor Centre • ArtSouthWA	• Directory established and maintained • Minimum 35 listings included • Increased enquiries, referrals and participation opportunities reported

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
4.	**Provide grant support and funding guidance to improve access to external funding.**	Develop and promote grant information resources, funding alerts, workshops and advisory support to help artists, creatives, community organisations and cultural groups identify and access grants, sponsorship and funding opportunities.	Access to funding was one of the most consistently identified needs across artists, creative groups and community organisations. Improving awareness of funding opportunities and supporting stronger applications can help attract external investment and enable the delivery of local arts and cultural initiatives.	High	Short	• Lotterywest • Arts South WA • DLGSC • Great Southern Development Commission	• Annual funding information sessions delivered • Increased number of grant applications submitted • Increased external funding secured
5.	**Support succession planning and volunteer development to strengthen the sustainability of community organisations.**	Support volunteer recruitment, leadership development, governance training and succession planning initiatives.	Volunteer fatigue, leadership succession and reliance on a small number of contributors emerged as key risks to the long-term sustainability of local organisations. Strengthening volunteer attraction, retention and leadership capacity will help ensure community groups remain active and capable of delivering arts and cultural initiatives into the future	High	Medium	• Community organisations • Volunteer Resource Centres • Local leaders	• Succession plans developed by key organisations • Increased volunteer participation • Improved organisational sustainability
6.	**Develop a Heritage Interpretation Strategy for the Shire**	Develop a Heritage Interpretation Strategy that identifies priority stories, themes, places and interpretation opportunities, and provides a framework for future signage, trails, storytelling initiatives, visitor experiences and heritage projects.	Heritage is a key component of Plantagenet's identity and visitor appeal. There are opportunities to better document, interpret and share these stories, including underrepresented histories. Building on the findings of cultural mapping, the strategy will identify priorities and provide a framework for future storytelling, interpretation, signage, trails and visitor experiences.	Medium	Medium-Long	• Menang Elders and community members • Mt Barker Museum and History Centre • Mt Barker Visitor Centre • Heritage Consultants	• Strategy completed and adopted • Priority interpretation projects identified • Heritage interpretation incorporated into trails, signage and visitor experiences
7.	**Review and Manage Shire Art Collection**	Audit, document and catalogue the Shire's art collection, identify conservation requirements, improve accessibility and interpretation, and develop priorities for future acquisition, management and display.	Managing the Shire's art collection is a core responsibility and a priority identified through the project brief. A structured review will improve understanding of collection assets, identify conservation and storage requirements, guide future acquisitions, and improve interpretation, display and community access.	High	Short	• Shire staff • ArtSouth WA • Collection specialists • Community volunteers	• Collection audit completed within 2 years • Collection register established • Conservation priorities identified • Artworks displayed and interpreted more effectively within 3 years

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
8.	**Develop a Public Art and Place Activation Framework**	identify priority locations establish maintenance principles identify opportunities for murals, interpretation and temporary activations guide future investment	Plantagenet's public spaces offer opportunities to strengthen community identity, encourage participation and enhance visitor experiences. A Public Art and Place Activation Framework will provide strategic direction for future public art, creative activation, interpretation and placemaking initiatives, while establishing priorities for maintenance, investment and partnership delivery. The framework will ensure future projects are coordinated, achievable and aligned with community aspirations.	High	Short	• Community groups • Local artists • Tourism stakeholders • Property owners	• Framework completed and adopted • Priority activation locations identified • Public art maintenance requirements documented • Minimum two activation projects delivered annually • Framework informs future grant applications and investment decisions

7.2 Tier 2 Partnership Actions

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
1.	**Support and facilitate opportunities for local and Menang Noongar storytelling initiatives.**	Focuses on story content and cultural visibility. Seek opportunities to support Aboriginal-led storytelling projects, signage, digital content, events and collaborations that share Menang Noongar culture, local stories and connections to Country.	One of the strongest and most consistent themes across engagement and research. Aboriginal participants highlighted the importance of sharing culture and strengthening cultural visibility, while the literature review recommends embedding Noongar storytelling and cultural knowledge as a foundational component of the strategy.	High	Short-Medium	• Menang Elders and community members • Mt Barker Museum and History Centre • Mt Barker Visitor Centre • Local schools • ArtSouthWA	• Minimum 5 storytelling initiatives delivered • Aboriginal cultural content incorporated into key events, trails or visitor experiences • Increased Aboriginal participation in arts and cultural programs.
2.	**Facilitate regional partnerships to support partnerships across the Great Southern.**	Develop partnerships with neighbouring local governments, regional arts organisations and tourism stakeholders to support collaborative projects and funding opportunities.	Strengthening regional partnerships will enable Plantagenet to leverage skills, resources, funding opportunities and audiences beyond the Shire. This action aligns with regional strategic directions that encourage collaboration between local governments, cultural organisations and creative networks across the Great Southern.	High	Short-Medium	• GSDC • Arts South WA • Tourism WA • Nearby local governments • Regional arts organisations	• Participation in at least 3 regional partnerships or projects • Joint funding applications submitted • Increased regional promotion of Plantagenet creative assets
3.	**Support Aboriginal-led cultural initiatives and opportunities to share cultural knowledge.**	Focuses on people, participation and cultural leadership.	Engagement highlighted the need for better promotion of local artists, creative businesses and cultural activities. A creative directory will increase visibility, support networking, improve access to opportunities, and help residents and visitors engage with Plantagenet's creative sector.	High	Short	• Menang Elders • Aboriginal organisations • Schools • Community groups • ArtSouthWA	• Minimum 5 Aboriginal cultural programs delivered • Increased Aboriginal participation and leadership • Positive participant feedback

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
4.	**Support youth creative programs that encourage participation and skills development.**	Partner with schools and community organisations to provide creative workshops, events, mentoring and development opportunities for young people.	Youth engagement was identified as a critical gap. Both engagement and strategic analysis highlighted the need for stronger creative pathways, low-barrier opportunities and increased participation by young people.	High	Short-Medium	• Schools • Youth services • Community organisations • Creative practitioners	• Minimum 100 young people participate across programs • Annual youth-focused creative opportunities delivered • • Increased youth representation in arts and cultural activities
5.	**Support inclusive arts and cultural activities that strengthen connection and participation across the community.**	Support projects, events and creative activities that create welcoming opportunities for Aboriginal people, young people, new residents and other underrepresented groups to participate in community life.	Plantagenet already benefits from strong community participation, volunteering and local pride. There is an opportunity to build on these strengths by supporting inclusive and accessible arts and cultural activities that help connect underrepresented groups with the broader community.	High	Short-Medium	• Community organisations • Creative practitioners • Community development consultants	• Minimum 60 participants across supported programs annually • Annual community-focused creative opportunities delivered • Increased underrepresented groups' participation in arts and cultural activities • Positive community feedback regarding inclusion and social connection
6.	**Facilitate professional development opportunities that build skills, knowledge and organisational capacity.**	Deliver workshops, mentoring and training focused on governance, leadership, business development, marketing, project management, volunteer management and creative practice.	Strong skills, governance and organisational capability are essential to sustaining a vibrant creative sector. Professional development can strengthen individuals and organisations, improve project delivery and support long-term sector growth and resilience.	High	Short-Medium	• DLGSC • Creative consultants • Regional partners • Arts South WA	• Minimum 10 professional development opportunities delivered • Positive participant feedback • Increased confidence and skills reported
7.	**Develop a coordinated visitor experience program by connecting and promoting existing activities, stories, events and destinations.**	Develop, package and promote connected arts, culture, heritage, food and wine, nature and Aboriginal cultural experiences that encourage residents and visitors to explore Plantagenet's unique places, stories and creative assets.	Plantagenet already has a rich mix of arts, heritage, food and wine, tourism, environmental and Aboriginal cultural assets. There is an opportunity to better coordinate, package and promote these experiences through a connected visitor program that strengthens place identity, increases participation and supports tourism outcomes. This action is best delivered through partnerships and coordinated promotion rather than direct Shire delivery.	High	Medium	• Visitor Centre • Tourism operators/ Tourism WA • Wineries / Restaurants • Heritage groups • Menang community • Arts organisations • Local businesses • Event organisers	• Coordinated program established • Increased participation in cultural experiences • Growth in visitation and event attendance/sales • Increased tourism-related cultural activity • New cultural tourism initiatives developed • Inclusion in regional promotion campaigns

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
8.	**Support place-based creative projects delivering permanent or longer-term placemaking outcomes**	Align projects with existing Place Plans and support permanent or longer-term creative initiatives, public realm improvements, storytelling projects and community-led placemaking activities that reflect local identity and aspirations.	Engagement consistently found that Plantagenet's identity is rooted in place, history, landscape and community spirit. Long-term place-based projects can strengthen local identity, foster community pride and leave a lasting legacy across townsites.	Medium-High	Medium	• Community groups • Shire of Plantagenet • Schools • Local artists • Townteams	• Creative projects delivered across multiple townsites • Increased community participation • Place Plans supported through implementation
9.	**Support artist showcases, exchanges and collaborative projects to build networks.**	Create opportunities for local artists to connect with wider audiences through showcase programs and regional partnerships.	Artist showcases and exchanges increase visibility, strengthen professional networks, foster collaboration and contribute to a more connected and sustainable creative sector.	Medium-High	Medium	• Arts South WA • Galleries • Regional arts organisations • Local artists	• Annual showcase opportunities delivered • Artist participation increased • New collaborations established
10.	**Facilitate intercultural events that promote cultural exchange and understanding**	Support events and activities celebrating cultural diversity, inclusion and community connection.	Inclusion, cultural exchange and celebrating diversity were identified through engagement, although not as strongly as Aboriginal and youth engagement. This action supports broader community cohesion and belonging.	Medium-High	Medium	• Community groups • Multicultural organisations • Schools • Aboriginal organisations	• Intercultural events delivered annually • Increased participation from diverse communities • Positive community feedback
11.	**Build digital capability across the creative sector**	Deliver practical training, mentoring and support that improves digital skills, online promotion, content creation, audience engagement, social media marketing, e-commerce and awareness of emerging technologies including AI.	Visibility, marketing and promotion were consistently identified as challenges for artists, creative businesses and community organisations. Building digital capability can strengthen audience reach, business sustainability and participation outcomes. Delivering training through specialist providers offers a cost-effective approach, while including AI and emerging technologies helps local creatives adapt to changing tools and audience expectations.	Medium-High	Medium	• Business support providers • Arts South WA • Creative practitioners	• Digital capability workshops delivered annually • Increased confidence in digital tools reported by participants • Improved online presence of local creatives • Increased participation and audience reach • Adoption of new digital marketing, content creation or AI tools demonstrated
12.	**Deliver Temporary and experimental creative activations**	Support temporary creative projects, pop-up events, performances, exhibitions and short-term public art activations that encourage participation, increase visitation and activate public spaces.	Creative activations provide visible and accessible opportunities for people to engage with arts and culture. They can deliver immediate community benefits, increase vibrancy and test ideas that may inform future longer-term projects.	Medium-High	Short-Medium	• Community groups • Local businesses • Artists • Event organisers • Townteams	• Minimum 5 activations delivered • Increased visitation and participation • Positive community feedback

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
13.	**Support leadership and capacity-building opportunities for young people, Aboriginal people and underrepresented groups.**	Support mentoring, leadership development and project opportunities for young people, Aboriginal people and other underrepresented groups to build confidence and community influence..	This is a valuable longer-term capacity-building action, but it is likely to be most effective once participation and engagement opportunities are already established through the higher-priority actions above.	Medium	Medium-Long	• Aboriginal organisations • Schools	• Leadership opportunities established • Increased representation in cultural activities and projects

7.3 Tier 3 Strategic Actions

Item	Action	Project Detail	Rationale	Priority	Timeframe	Partners	Measure Of Success (Within 5 Year Timeframe)
1.	**Develop dedicated cultural trail products and supporting infrastructure.**	Develop and promote thematic cultural trails that connect arts, heritage, Aboriginal culture, food and wine, nature, local attractions and community stories through curated visitor experiences across the Shire.	Plantagenet's strengths lie in its landscapes, heritage, agricultural character, creative assets, and visitor attractions. Cultural trails can connect these strengths, improve visitor experiences, increase visibility of local artists and businesses, encourage longer stays and support both tourism and community pride.	High	Medium	• Visitor Centre • Tourism operators • Wineries • Restaurants • Heritage groups • Menang community • Arts organisations • Local businesses	• At least 2 cultural trails established • Gallery and studio trail incorporated into broader trail network • Trail usage and visitor engagement demonstrated • Positive visitor and business feedback
2.	**Explore opportunities for a cultural and visitor gateway that showcases Plantagenet's identity, stories and creative strengths.**	Investigate options for a landmark cultural gateway or visitor hub along Albany Highway that encourages travellers to stop, learn more about the region and engage with local arts, culture, heritage, businesses and tourism experiences. Opportunities may include interpretive elements, creative installations, visitor information, exhibition space, local produce and artisan showcases, or integrated cultural storytelling experiences.	Community engagement identified a strong desire for a memorable arrival experience that encourages visitors to stop and explore the Shire. A cultural gateway could strengthen first impressions, increase visitation, promote local creatives and businesses, support tourism outcomes and provide a highly visible expression of Plantagenet's unique identity and stories.	Medium	Long	• Shire of Plantagenet • Visitor Centre • Menang community • General Community • Tourism stakeholders	• Feasibility assessment completed • • Funding opportunities identified • Gateway project progressed or incorporated into future planning
3.	**Establish artist residency opportunities that attract visitors and contribute to cultural exchange.**	Develop artist-in-residence programs that support creative development, community participation and visitation.	High-impact but resource-intensive, requiring longer-term infrastructure, funding and visitor demand.	Medium-Low	Long	• Arts South WA • Accommodation providers (hotels and home stays) • Local artists • Tourism operators	• Residency model developed • Minimum 3 residencies delivered
4.	**Establish a fund for public art**	Create a dedicated funding mechanism to support commissioning, acquisition and maintenance of public art.	Valuable for profile building but most effective once stronger tourism products, partnerships and creative infrastructure are established.	Low	Long	• Lotterywest • Private sponsors • Developers • Community organisations	• Fund established • Public art projects delivered • Increased visibility of public art across the Shire