Creative Banyule

Arts and Culture Strategy 2023 - 2031

Year 1 Achievements Report



Banyule
City Council

Mitch Tambo – Twilight Sounds 2025

Year 1 at a Glance

Festivals & Events

Event	Attendance Numbers	Artists involved / % local to Banyule	Community groups involved	Local businesses involved
Eco Festival	2,000	29 (97%)	14	5
Youthfest	5,500	67 (100%)	17	25
Malahang Festival	2,000	36 (83%)	24	4
Carols By Candlelight	8,000	100 (75%)	1	5
Twilight Sounds	3,000	41 (59%)	1	5
Lantern Festival	7,000	19 (58%)	0	4
Outdoor Movies x 4	2,100	5 (100%)	3	0
Harmony Bazaar	1,500	10 (20%)	5	0
TOTALS	**31,100**	**307 (74%)**	**65**	**48**



Lantern Festival 2025



Outdoor Movies 2024



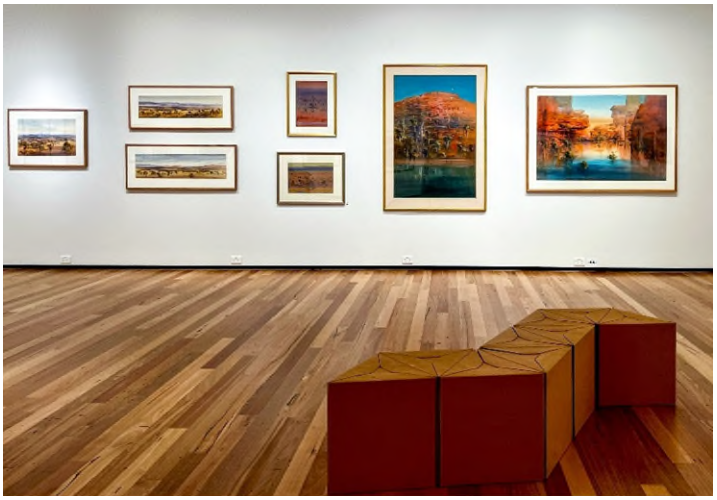
Carols by Candlelight 2024



Malahang Festival 2024

Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub

Arts Space	No. of Exhibitions/ Programs	No. of Artists	Visitor Numbers	Other Events
Art Gallery 275	8 – major exhibitions	145	4,000	12 – artist talks, launch events, performances
Loft 275	17 – community exhibitions	137 (Banyule artists)	unknown	15 – artist talks, launch events, performances
Mungga Artist Studios	15 – artist residencies	43	200 – workshop attendances	27 – workshops
Yarra-me Djila Theatrette	12 – performances	36	600	5 – presentation events
TOTALS	**52**	**361**	**4,800+**	**59**



A Return to Heidelberg by John Borrack – Art Gallery 275



Friday Night Live – Yarra-me-Djila Theatrette



Parallel Clay Practice – Artist Talk – Loft 275



Brett Scapin - *Books & Their People* - Artist Residency – Mungga Artist Studios

Paid Opportunities for Artists

Activity	No. of Commissions / Gigs / Engagements
Public Art Commissions	1
Art In Public Spaces – Temporary Installations	2
Mural Commissions	6
Urban Lightbox Gallery Exhibits	25
Chillin' In Banyule – Music Performances	62
Arts & Culture Project Grants	7
Festivals – Performances & Workshops	95
Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub Programs	55
TOTAL	**253**

External Funding & Partnerships

Federal	**Live Music Australia** – $47,400 funding to program young and emerging artists at Twilight Sounds 2025.
	National Gallery of Australia – partnership secured as part of *Sharing the National Collection* program, within Australia's National Cultural Policy, to loan Heidelberg School artworks to Banyule 2025-2027.
State	**Music Victoria** – $25,500 funding, as part of the *On the Road Again* initiative, to program a short season of contemporary live music performances at Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub in 2024.
Other	**Empire Music Studios** – partnership to host *Chillin' in Banyule* season launch. Sponsorship associated with Empire Studios gave 12 local musicians professional studio recording time.
	St Kilda Film Festival – partnership brought the festival's regional touring program to Hoyts Greensborough in 2024. The first time it has been presented in suburban Melbourne.

Annual Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2025

Provision of arts and cultural venues, spaces, and facilities.

- Importance rating of these facilities was 9.0 out of 10
- Satisfaction rating with these facilities was 8.0 out of 10, or an "excellent" level of satisfaction

Provision of arts and cultural events, programs and activities.

- Importance rating of these services was 8.9 out of 10
- Satisfaction rating with these services was 8.1 out of 10, or an "excellent" level of satisfaction

Creative Banyule Year 1 Action Plan Outcomes

35 Actions completed	9 Actions partially completed	5 Actions not completed /deferred

Creative Banyule Year 1 Highlights

Focus Area: Foster a sustainable and thriving creative sector

Creative Sector Analysis

Completed an analysis report of ABR Census data (2021), which provided strong insights into the dynamics of our local sector.

The creative industries are small in Banyule, accounting for 2% of businesses (GST registered) and less than 2% of employment. However, this figure has grown since 2018.

More significantly, there are more than 1,400 sole traders (and non-GST entities) categorized under the Creative Industries. 1,000 of these are categorized as Creative Artists, Writers, Musicians & Performers. Ivanhoe has the most registered ABNs. Followed by Greensborough, Rosanna and Montmorency.

These insights will assist Council in prioritizing initiatives and resources as well as measuring levels of engagement and program uptake. Ongoing analysis will continue, monitoring trends over time.



(Mass Drawing Intensive, Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub)

Supporting Local Creatives Program Review

Consulted with local artists and creatives through an online survey, pop-ups and an in-person community workshop. Artists were asked about development needs, challenges and preferred communication methods. 56 artists completed the online survey, with 20 artists attending the workshop.

Key outcomes of this consultation include:

- Expanding networking opportunities tailored to specific arts practices and networking styles.
- Supporting further professional development based on topics artists have requested.
- Review long-term platform suitability to support the objectives of the Pinpoint program.
- Accelerate options for multi-use of council facilities for use by artists or creative activity.

Professional Development and Networking

Delivered eight free professional development workshops, including: Grant writing and project planning, photography for folio documentation, professional copywriting, and two mentorship sessions for a local playwright's group. 94 artists participated.

Additionally, 15 artists were selected for a free five-week workshop series facilitated by T-Projects Arts Consultants, on developing a public art practice. Designed to build capacity of artists considering opportunities within Banyule (such as Art in Public Spaces Program) or in the broader sector.

Presented three networking events, including: two in-studio events hosted by local artists, plus one creative industries night (panel discussion and networking) in collaboration with Nillumbik Council. 90 artists participated across the program.



Established a partnership with Empire Music Studios in Heidelberg West to host the *Chillin' in Banyule* season launch. Sponsorship associated with Empire Studios awarded 12 Banyule-based musicians with professional studio recording time.

(David Cosma, Chillin' in Banyule Launch)

Artist Funding and Support

Awarded a $60,000 Arts & Culture Grant pool to seven successful applicants. Five individuals and two groups were awarded up to $10,000 each for projects ranging from community art projects, exhibition and programming outcomes at Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub, site specific installations, artist skills development, and music programs for both communities and young families.

Supported the Banyule Open Studios artist association with $10,000 funding and other in-kind sponsorship for the annual open studios weekend.

Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub continues to grow as a centre for artist activity and opportunity. Our annual program call-out for local artists received an overwhelming response from more than 30 artists. 75% of EOIs were then developed into program outcomes with full venue, marketing and operational support.

277 Banyule-based artists exhibited, performed, held a residency, or ran a workshop in 2024-2025.



(Performance at ILCH, by Youbi Lee & Takiguchi)

Best Practice and Advocacy

Revised public art and mural commissioning processes to reduce the requirement for creative contributions from artists at the EOI stage. Only shortlisted artists are asked for detailed creative concept development work, for which a fee is paid.

Expertise within the Arts & Culture team has been utilised on a range of projects across Council that incorporate artists or deliver creative outcomes. This is building a culture of best practice and recognition of creative industries standards.

Support for capital works projects, community celebrations, civic and public realm improvements, among others, include mural and sculptural commissions, event planning and delivery, script development, licensing & copyright Agreements.



(Lizard sculpture by Phillip HOWe, Nellie Ibbott Reserve)

Council contributed a written submission in response to the Victorian Government's discussion paper on the new Creative State strategy. Council advocated for increased venues and opportunities for artists to develop their skills, experience, employment and audiences through suburban arts facilities and events.

Focus Area: Enhance social connection, health and wellbeing

Festivals & Events Framework

Completed first stage of a framework for planning and delivery of festivals and events. This work sets out criteria around social and cultural outcomes, as well as scale and location requirements.



(Malahang Festival 2024)

Festivals and event programming is deliberately spread across the municipality, with a focus on north, mid and south, to ensure all communities can access an event in their area. The program is divided into three tiers of scale: major (over 3,000 people), medium (200 to 3000) small (up to 200). Medium events are programmed in areas that don't have suitable locations to host large scale festivals.

Further work on the framework will incorporate inclusion and equity measures, and alignment to internal strategies. The Festivals and Events Framework ensures Council events continue to be appropriate for the Banyule community profile and have maximum impact on community wellbeing. It serves as a matrix for testing new festival ideas and ensuring existing events remain relevant.

Support for community events

Conducted a formal review of Council's Event Permit application/approval process, resulting in the introduction of an event permit matrix. This a tool for assessing all elements of a public event permit application. This work has streamlined internal decision-making processes for officers and produced a range of documentation templates that provide clarity and efficiencies for applicants.

A significant number of downloadable resources, such as event planning guidelines, checklists, risk management plans, have been developed to support community groups in planning safe and well-managed events.

Intercultural Programs

Delivered new event, in support of Harmony Week 2025. Held at Binnak Park in Watsonia North, *Harmony Bazaar* included multicultural market and food stalls, interactive music and dance workshops, and a film screening.

A collaborative working relationship with Not-For-Profit service provider, *Celebrating and Conserving Cultures* supported programming and community stall activation at *Harmony Bazaar*. Cultural groups represented include African, Persian, Chinese and the Wurundjeri Traditional Owners. 500 people attended the event.

Provided venue and marketing support to *Culture Cafe*, a series of monthly events of dance, music and poetry presented by the Indian community, with a focus on intergenerational sharing of culture.



(Harmony Bazaar, 2025)

Focus Area: Celebrate First Nations Culture

Barrbunin Beek Artists

The Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place in Heidelberg West, is a dedicated community hub for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As a place where First Nations people can connect to country, culture and build identity, art features strongly in its programs.

In 2024 Council collaborated with Barrbunin Beek to curate an exhibition at Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub. The exhibition showcased the range of art made by artists from the Barrbunin Beek community, with many pieces made available for sale. 20 artists exhibited.

Artists from Barrbunin Beek have also been invited, through a dedicated survey, to participate in the *Supporting Local Creatives* Program Review, ensuring a diversity of voices are included.



(Barrbunin Beek Gathering Place community art exhibition, 2024)

First Nations arts and culture across the municipality

Council has made a commitment to include First Nations artists, communities or cultural content at all major festivals presented by Banyule.

In 2024-205 this included:

- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder and Smoking Ceremony at Malahang Festival, as well as stalls run by Barrbunin Beek and Reconciliation Victoria.
- World Music Star, and proud Gamilaraay man, Mitch Tambo headlined Twilight Sounds Music Festival in 2025.
- *Neon Ngargee* performance of Kulin Nations dance and songs, with dancers painted in neon colours and ochre illuminated by black lights, featured at Lantern Festival 2025.
- Djirri Djirri Dancers presented an interactive performance and workshop at Harmony Bazaar.



(Djirri Djirri Dancers, Harmony Bazaar, 2025)

Similarly, featuring First Nations artists in exhibitions and programs at Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub forms part of annual programming commitments. In addition to the Barrbunin Beek community art exhibition, other programs include:

- *Conduit*: bringing together artworks by Peta Clancy and Jo Scicluna, navigating the complex histories of this land, through consideration of the Birrarung as a major conduit of knowledge, culture, life and connection.
- *Two Conversations on The Birrarung*: an immersive exploration of the iconic river, seen through unique visual perspectives of contemporary Banyule-based artists Phillip HOWe and Anthony Williams.

Focus Area: Create equitable participation in arts and cultural experiences

Removing barriers

All of Council's arts and culture programs and events are presented free of charge to participants. From major festivals, to live music performances, to professional development programs for artists, to workshops at Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub. Financial barriers are one of the biggest challenges to equitable access to the arts but do not apply to Council's program offer.

Access and inclusion infrastructure elements have been extended in the design of major festivals to include – temporary flooring and pathways at Malahang Festival, Eco Festival and Lantern Festival. Community bus and priority seating for elderly at Carols by Candlelight. Side of stage screens at Carols by Candlelight and Twilight Sounds. Auslan interpreters at multiple events. Accessible toilets and parking. Downloadable social stories.



(Temporary accessible flooring, Malahang Festival 2024)

Art for all in the streets

Increased investment in our annual *Art In Public Spaces* program offers opportunity for people to have creative experiences in places where they already feel a sense of connection and belonging. Higher project budgets for participating artists as well as professional capacity building programs for artists considering working in the public realm, has grown the program and delivered quality results.

Projects in 2024 include:

- *Neighbourhood Watch* in Greensborough Walk by Aldona Kmieć – detailed photography turning familiar streets into abstract art, encouraging everyone to seek out where each photo was taken.
- *CHRYSALIS* at Kitchener Reserve, Ivanhoe by Lachlan Plain – 3 grand cocoons suspended from the trees, illuminated by a symphony of light, projection, and sound, blending animation and nature footage.



(CHRYSALIS by Lachlan Plain – Art In Public Spaces 2024)

Responding to participation gaps

A new survey has been set up to seek ongoing feedback on our events and understand who is and is not attending. Over the 2024 festival season 500 surveys were conducted with participants at all major and medium scaled events.

The surveys found that:

- Events are well-received with an average satisfaction rating of 8.5/10.
- People like the friendly, community atmosphere and the fact that they are free.
- People who live near an event location are more likely to attend.
- Attendance demographics do not yet reflect the diversity profile of the Banyule community.

In response to this data, event programming has been deliberately spread across the municipality, with a focus on north, mid and south, to ensure all communities can access an event in their area.

Diversity of programming continues to increase. In 2024 the local Chao Feng Chinese Orchestra was programmed at *Carols by Candlelight*, held in Greensborough. Banyule's northeastern precincts maintain a higher population of Chinese residents.

Focus Area: Realise the creative potential of Banyule's spaces and places

Investment in public art commissions

Integrating creative outcomes into civic and open space improvements continues to be an important consideration of Council planning.

Year 1 of the Creative Banyule strategy has delivered the following initiatives:

- Replacement of a beloved Lizard Sculpture in Nellie Ibbott Reserve, Ivanhoe. Local artist Phillip HOWe created an ornate sculpture/ bench seat from repurposed timber. The work pays homage to the previous sculpture and is inspired by the spirit of the Indigenous Blue Tongue – a local resident.
- Murals and a sculpture were incorporated into the new St James Reserve playground, in Heidelberg West. The active and passive recreational nature of the site saw playful murals installed on the hit-up wall and public toilets, and a quaint bear sculpture created from repurposed timber.
- New cricket nets at Greensborough War Memorial Park feature a large-scale mural on the residential sound wall. The mural features native fauna subtly embedded within a stylised landscape.



(Mural by Stephanie Cartledge – Greensborough War Memorial Park)

- Local artists Louise Endicott and Pey Chi contributed designs for new bin wraps at the Waiora Road and McNamara Road shops. Part of a pilot program to protect street infrastructure from vandalism and add colour to local shopping strips.
- Heidelberg Gardens has been selected as the site for a new major public art commission. The commission will form part of park improvements in alignment the objectives of the Heidelberg Park Masterplan and Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (Yarra Strategic Plan). The commission will be awarded to a First Nations artist and consultation with Wurundjeri Corporation has informed the scoping and planning stage. Artist selection process will commence in late 2025.

A significant venue for arts and cultural activity

Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub's reputation as a venue of significance continues to advance. This has been achieved through ongoing quality programming as well as capital improvements which will enable exciting new possibilities.



(Exhibition opening night at ILCH – 2024)

Upgrades to climate and environmental controls in Art Gallery 275 have brought the venue in line with museum standards. This work has now enabled Banyule Council to enter an agreement with the National Gallery of Australia to loan artworks by artists from the famous and locally significant Heidelberg School. The *Early Impressions* exhibition will open in mid-2025 and the artworks will remain on display for two years. Further touring exhibitions or significant loans are an ongoing possibility.

The Yarra-me Djila Theatrette attracted funding and programming support from Music Victoria in early 2024. Part of part of Victorian Government's initiative *On the Road Again*, to support the return of live music events across the state. *Friday Night Live* consisted of three live music events, featuring 19 Melbourne-based musicians. Attended by 240 people.

Highlights of the ILCH exhibition program in 2024-2025 include:

- *ARC* – by Jutta Pryor, exploring the interplay between her video projections and her late husband Anthony Pryor's sculptures.
- *Two Conversations on The Birrarung* – an immersive exploration of the iconic river, seen through unique visual perspectives of contemporary Banyule-based artists Phillip HOWe and Anthony Williams.
- *Conduit* – bringing together artworks by Peta Clancy and Jo Scicluna navigating the complex histories of this land, through consideration of the Birrarung as a major conduit of knowledge, culture, life and connection.
- *A Return to Heidelberg* – a retrospective of one of Australia's finest landscape artists, John Borrack, whose work was heavily influenced by the rich cultural history of the Heidelberg district where he grew up.
- *Treasures from the Banyule Art Collection* – showcasing artworks acquired by Banyule Council over many years and represent some of the greatest contemporary Australian artists of the last 5 decades.



(Treasures from the Banyule Art Collection – Art Gallery 275)

Long-term planning for cultural infrastructure

Through the Banyule Community Infrastructure Plan, a needs analysis project has commenced which, to date includes:

- An audit of existing council facilities for potential multi-use.
- Consultation with local schools about potential community utilisation of facilities such as theatre complexes.
- Consultation with local artists about desired facility needs.
- Analysis of 2021 ABR Census data regarding Banyule's creative sector – defining creative business categories and spread within Banyule.

The needs analysis project will continue in 2025-2026 to include a feasibility study focused on options for increasing community arts facilities.



(Community art workshop at Mungga Artist Studios 2024)

Ongoing advocacy to the State Government about the Banyule Theatre complex has continued in 2024-2025, with no clear direction for the facility's future determined as yet. However, engagement with multiple community groups, potential users and interested local parties, has taken place to ensure their voices are understood and represented.

Improved integrated planning processes have increased opportunities for arts and cultural outcomes in Open Space and Urban Planning projects. This has resulted in consideration of outdoor spaces as temporary venues in public realm planning, and inclusion in capital works delivery projects of:

- murals in 2 x public toilet projects, 1 x playground, 1 x sporting facility
- sculpture in 2 x park reserves.

Additionally, a recent realignment of internal departments has brought Arts and Culture closer to the Inclusive Enterprise and Local Economy department. Moving forward this will enable stronger strategic synergies to not only support small business and sole trader development but increase more significant opportunities for creative activation of Banyule's Activity Centres.