Arts and Culture
Strategic Plan

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District Council of
Loxton
Waikerie

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the first people of the River Murray and Mallee Region as the traditional custodians of the land and waters on which we meet and pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

District Council of Loxton Waikerie has a sound foundation for the development of arts and cultural activity. Across the region there are several individuals and groups who are committed to arts and cultural development, supporting activities which help sustain the community culturally, socially and economically. As detailed in the "Background" component of this document, there are many organisations that work to develop activities which foster creativity and showcase the culture of the region and the region has a history of delivering events that provide cultural interactions.

Based on the consultation and engagement undertaken to develop this strategy, many indicated a disconnect and a lack of consistency in relation to arts and cultural development. There is a desire to increase opportunities for the local community and visitors to engage with arts and culture but increasing capacity and providing ongoing support is essential in achieving this. Hence the goals in this plan focus primarily on capacity building and activation, with strategies focusing on increasing access to places and spaces, skills development, promoting First Nations culture, events, cultural tourism, and community arts and cultural development.

The recent partnership with Country Arts South Australia has provided considerable momentum for the Council area from an arts and cultural perspective with this plan designed to leverage this and encourage both Council and the community to invest. Enhancing and better promoting existing activities and developing new initiatives will help see the arts and cultural plan's vision realised – with a strong and active arts community, arts and creativity embedded within the District Council of Loxton Waikerie and a cultural offering that celebrates local heritage and attracts visitors to the region.

Continuing to resource an arts and cultural facilitator role, partnering with organisations and neighbouring Councils and attracting funding will also be critical to achieving Council's goals. This investment will not only support growth within the arts and cultural sector it will also strengthen the community on a social, environmental and economic level.

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WHY ARTS AND CULTURE?

Investment in arts and culture to develop and strengthen communities from a social and economic perspective is recognised the world over. There is growing body of evidence that suggests that arts and cultural activities and fostering creativity can provide a range of both for individuals, groups and communities as a whole. The Arts can help to develop vibrant and attractive places, connect people, and foster innovation and entrepreneurial activity within communities. Research undertaken by universities and government organisations indicate that people who engage in arts activities are healthier and more connected and that arts and cultural activity contributes to regional economies and improves education outcomes.

This plan has been developed in the context of this evidence with the expectation that if Council and the community continue to invest in arts and culture that it will have a positive impact on the Council region, supporting sustainability, diversity and resilience on an economic and social level. The following provides an overview of some of the evidence gathered internationally.

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WHY ARTS AND CULTURE?

Supporting the Economy

- The Australian creative industries sector contributes more than $90billion to the national economy and exports $3.2billion annually. It adds $46billion to Australia's GDP. [1]
- Pre-pandemic, an estimated 65000 full and part-time jobs are created by monies spend on live music nationally with taxation revenue generated for all tiers of government (2014) [2]
- Arts Tourists (visitors directly who travel to experience arts and culture) are more likely to stay longer and spend more when travelling than other domestic tourists. [3]

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

- From a health perspective people who participate in 2 or more hours of arts-based activities per week experience significantly better mental wellbeing. [4]
- A UK study demonstrates that the social return on investment for arts engagement is 1:118. This means that for every £1 invested, a social value of £118 is generated – mainly in forgone treatment bills, reducing GP visits by 28% and attendance at emergency wards by 24%. [5]

Supporting Education

- Lower income students who are involved in arts activities have higher academic achievement. [6]
- The arts encourage self-directed learning and self-efficacy. The arts connect students to themselves and each other. [7]

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[1] Valuing Australia's Creative Industries 0213. https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/australias-creative-industries-valuation
[2] https://livemusicoffice.com.au/wpcontent/ uploads/2015/08/LiveMusic-report-FINAL.pdf
[3] https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/domestic-artstourismconnecting-the-country/
[4] From Research undertaken by Dr Christina Davies 2016 https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-015-2672-7
[5] Ways to Wellbeing. Social Prescribing Program. Wellbeing Enterprises UK (2017) http://www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/206921-low-res.pdf
[6] Catteral, James S. (2012). The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies. Washington, District of Columbia: National Endowment for the Arts
[7] McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zarkeras, & Brooks, 2004.

BACKGROUND

The District Council of Loxton Waikerie community is known for its reputation as one of South Australia's great food bowls, which the locals are very proud of. The region has long been known for its abundant citrus orchards but it is also a substantial producer of grapes, cereal crops and more recently almonds and other emerging varieties. There are several First Nations groups who are considered the traditional owners of the region with Europeans venturing into the area from the mid 1800s. The region was one of the many in South Australia where German-speaking Lutherans settled in the mid 19th century and the opening of the Railway in 1914 and post-war soldier settlement programs resulted in substantial population growth.

From a geographic and community level, the two major towns in the district, Loxton and Waikerie operate quite separately with almost 75kms between them. The larger of the two, Loxton is further east and much closer to Berri, Barmera and Renmark. The history of both the major towns is quite different. Waikerie was formally established in 1894 under a communal system, which had mixed success. The District Council of Waikerie was proclaimed in 1914, and eventually amalgamated with District Council of Loxton and District Council of Brown's Well in 1997. Loxton was originally part of the Bookpurnong Station with a Post Office opened to serve settlers on the site, then known as Loxton's Hut. Landholders convened a meeting in 1909 to form a Council, which was officially proclaimed in 1910.

On a practical level for work, services, retail and social needs, many Loxton residents gravitate North-East to the nearby Riverland communities. Waikerie, which is in the north-west part of the Council is closer to Adelaide on the Sturt Highway, one of South Australia's major transport corridors. The Council area also consists of several small villages and farming areas and despite their geographical distances, all share common traits and values.

Like many communities in regional Australia, engagement in sporting activities is popular and its position in South Australia's Riverland sees the River Murray loom large on an environmental, cultural and economic level for the community. The community enjoy a great love of the river and its broader eco-system and value the recreational, agricultural and aesthetic value it provides.

From an art and cultural perspective, the community has a great track record of events, programs and activities, although there is great opportunity for further development with a more visible and sustained arts and cultural presence across the region.

The Rainmoth Gallery in Waikerie provides a strong visual arts presence in western part of the Council region and the Historic Village in Loxton is quite a unique heritage facility not only in the region but in South Australia. Other organisations / facilities including libraries, The Pines and the Chambers of Commerce all add to the cultural fabric of the region, hosting programs, supporting events and facilitating activities. The Silo Art in Waikerie is also well-known and further work is underway to increase public art in the Council area. Mardi Gras, Arts on Terrace, the Rock and Roll Festival, Riverfront Markets, Loxton Show and Citrus Fest have all played a part in showcasing District Council of Loxton Waikerie's cultural credibility – bringing locals together and attracting visitors to the region.

In 2022, Council entered into a 2-year partnership with Country Arts South Australia to employ an Arts and Cultural Facilitator. This role has since initiated a range of activities and provided support for both groups and individuals, involved in arts and cultural activities. The region's involvement in the 2023 Fringe and South Australia's Guitar Festival can be directly attributed to the partnership and the sentiment in the community indicates that the Arts and Cultural Facilitator role has created substantial momentum in the Arts and Cultural Space.

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ARTS AND CULTURE DEFINITION

The definitions provide a sense of what we are talking about when we use the terms “arts” and “culture”. They are closely related and often used interchangeably but they refer to different concepts.

Arts

Refers to the creation and expression of imagination and creative skill in a visual, auditory, performance, or literary medium.

It includes tangible and intangible products or expressions of creativity. The arts are a way of articulating ideas, real or imagined by using a variety of media including film, painting, music and/or theatre. These articulations can be experienced temporarily or in an ongoing or permanent way.

Arts includes but is not limited to:

Film	Comedy	Design
Drawing	Circus	Crafts
Painting	Puppetry	Textiles
Music	Storytelling	Dance
Poetry	Television	Digital Media
Literature	Architecture	Photography
Theatre	Fashion	Sculpture

Culture

Refers to the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that members of a society use to celebrate, preserve and characterise their world and the human relationships they share within it. It can be expressed in a variety of ways on a collective and individual level. It is closely related to the arts because we often experience, acknowledge or preserve our culture through artistic expressions and engagement with creative products or experiences. Culture evolves and is shaped by global, local and individual influences, our education, history and relationships with each other and institutions. Culture includes customs, traditions, social norms and is reflected in art as well as:

Language	Urban design	Rituals
Cuisine	Ethnicity	Social structures
Architecture	Stories	Heritage
Fashion	Festivals	

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ARTS AND CULTURE VISION

Arts and cultural activity play an important role in strengthening and sustaining a vibrant and multifaceted Loxton Waikerie community. The region is known for its:

- Dynamic and active arts community.
- Opportunities to participate in arts activities as part of everyday life.
- High quality cultural tourism experiences.

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ARTS AND CULTURE GOALS

Pillar: Capacity Building

1. Great Places and Spaces

Providing and developing places and spaces for arts and cultural engagement.

2. Improved Skills Development

Strengthening the capactiy of individuals and groups to develop and engage with arts and cultural activities.

3. Strong Networking and Better Communication

Better promoting arts and culture and improving the connectivity of groups and individuals involved in arts and culture.

Pillar: Arts and Culture Activity Development

4. Improved Cultural Tourism Offering

Enhancing existing arts and cultural assets and activities and developing new ones that improve visitor experiences.

5. Growing and Improving Arts and Cultral Programming

Increased visibility of First Nations culture and development, and presentation of visual, performing, and digital arts.

6. Increased Participation in Community Arts and Cultural Activities

Encouraging participation in arts and cultural activities which support social connectedness, education, and health and wellbeing outcomes.

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PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Principles for Development provide a guiding framework for the development and delivery of activities related to this plan. They ensure the activities have the best possible chance of engaging people and achieving the best possible outcome for Council and the broader community.

1. Relevance

Arts cultural activities will be developed in the context of the Council region's culture and identity. The community should be challenged from time to time but overall, they should be able to relate to the themes and ideas incorporated into activities.

2. Sharing Local Stories

Projects should wherever possible foster a culture of sharing, preserving and celebrating local stories – both in the context of history and on a contemporary level.

3. Access and Inclusion

Council will ensure arts activities are inclusive and aim to help those who are disadvantage to mitigate any barriers to participating or engaging in arts and culture.

4. Collaboration

Council will work collaboratively with community and other stakeholders to realise the vision detailed in this plan, leveraging partnership and fostering community leadership wherever possible.

5. Innovation and Risk Taking

Council fosters a culture of innovation in the arts and is prepared to be bold and take risks in relation the development of arts in the region.

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DETAILED STRATEGY

1. Great Places and Spaces

Providing and developing places and spaces for arts and cultural engagement

Pillar: Capacity Building

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
1.1 Improve access to halls and community spaces	1.1.1 Undertake an audit of all commercial and community venues and identify and plan for possible improvements that could be made to increase the viability of venues such as; lighting, hanging system, PA etc	Year 1
	1.1.2 Create a digital guide for artists / performers both local and visiting detailing available spaces for use.	Year 1
	1.1.3 Develop an equipment bank / kit for arts, cultural and community events and activities. E.g., PA, Tables and Chairs, Lighting, Display Equipment, First Aid Kits, Portable Toilets etc.	Years 4-5 / Ongoing
	1.1.4 Work with sport and recreation groups to better utilise spaces for arts and culture	Years 2-3
1.2 Form partnerships with private venue owners and link	1.2.1 Strengthen relationships with other venue owners / caretakers and encourage increased access for arts and culture. E.g., the High School Performing Arts Venue.	Ongoing
	1.2.2 Present a series of Community Arts Familiarisation Sessions for community groups, increasing their understanding of Community Arts and Cultural Development and the role it plays in building stronger communities.	Years 2-3

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DETAILED STRATEGY

2. Improved Skills and Knowledge

Strengthening the capacity of artists and community and arts-based and groups / organisations to develop arts and cultural activities.
Pillar: Capacity Building

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
2.1 Strengthen local Groups, Social Services and Schools Arts and cultural capacity.	2.1.1 Present a series of Community Arts Familiarisation Sessions for community groups, increasing their understanding of Community Arts and Cultural Development and the role it plays in building stronger communities.	Ongoing
	2.1.2 Partner with community groups to present arts and cultural activities which have community health and wellbeing outcomes.	Ongoing
	2.1.3 Continue to provide funding for and support arts groups through community grants program.	Years 4-5 / Ongoing
	2.1.4 Promote volunteering within arts and cultural groups and provide support through training.	Ongoing
	2.1.5 Continue to provide support and improve capability through ongoing advice, expertise and coordination of an arts and cultural facilitator.	Ongoing
	2.1.6 Continue to support local history groups such as Waikerie Historical Society and the Loxton Archive Committee to continue their work and improve their marketing and community engagement skills.	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
2.2 Upskill and Suppoort Artists	2.2.1 Provide mentoring opportunities within Council arts and cultural initiatives	Ongoing
	2.2.2 Engage local artists in festivals and events and develop and support income generating activities.	Ongoing
	2.2.3 Present skills development workshops for artists focusing on funding, business development skills along with practice skills.	Years 4-5
	2.2.4 Develop exhibition and performance opportunities that help artists and arts groups reach audiences and grow their skills.	Ongoing

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DETAILED STRATEGY

3. Strong Networking and Improved Communication

Better promoting arts and culture and improving the connectivity of groups and individuals involved in arts and culture

Pillar: Capacity Building

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
3.1 Create stronger arts and culture networks	3.1.1 Host cultural networking events with a view to developing an informal self-managed network	Years 1-3
	3.1.2 Work with nearby Council to support networking and collaboration of groups and artists across the whole of the Riverland.	Years 2-5
	3.1.3 Scope the need for an online network for artists and arts-interested people to connect, collaborate and cross-promote.	Years 1-3
	3.1.4 Identify and work with First Nations people to help inform both arts and cultural and other activities across the Council area.	Years 4-5 / Ongoing
3.2 Increase the profile of arts and culture in the Council area	3.2.1 Increase the promotion of arts and culture activities and outcomes through Council marketing channels.	Year 1 / Ongoing
	3.2.2 Work with other agencies including RDA, Chambers of Commerce and Riverland Tourism to cross promote arts and cultural activity and increase visibility.	Year 1 / Ongoing

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DETAILED STRATEGY

4. Improved Cultural Tourism Offering

Enhancing existing arts and cultural assets and activities and developing new ones that improve visitor experiences
Developing places and spaces for arts and cultural engagement

Pillar: Arts and Cultural Activity Developoment

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
4.1 Events development	4.1.1 Provide support for the enhancement of existing and new events including artists and arts organisations.	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
	4.1.2 Attract / develop major outdoor event for the region e.g., Music Event or redevelopment of Citrus Fest.	Years 4-5
	4.1.3 Participate in state-based initiatives e.g., Fringe, Guitar Festival, SALA, History Month etc.	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
	4.1.4 Collaborate with nearby Council's on the delivery of events – growing and improving events on a practical and promotional level.	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
4.2 Experience development and improvement	4.2.1 Support and develop partnerships between businesses and artists / arts groups to develop cultural tourism products and experiences.	Years 2-3
	4.2.2 Pilot a cultural tourism incentive program, working with artists and groups to develop and test cultural tourism products and experiences – e.g., History tours or Food + Art Adventures.	Years 2-3
	4.2.3 Continue to support and promote existing cultural experiences including Silo Art and Storytowns -through local businesses and other channels.	Year 1 / Ongoing
	4.2.4 Enhance, activate and create history spaces and look for opportunities to develop cultural heritage experiences in collaboration with local historical groups and the library.	Years 2-5

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DETAILED STRATEGY

5. Growing and Improving Arts and Cultural Programming

Increased visibility of First Nations culture and development and presentation of visual, performing and digital arts.

Pillar: Arts and Cultural Activity Developoment

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
5.1 Improve the visibility of First Nations Culture	5.1.1 Seek out relevant First Nations leaders – locally and from further afield to identify and implement key activities to promote First Nations culture.	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
	5.1.2 Scope the development of interpretive signage for First Nation's sites throughout the region.	Years 2-5
	5.1.3 Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan which provides some simple and preliminary actions that demonstrates Council's commitment to First Nation's culture.	Years 2-5
5.2 Activate community spaces through arts and cultural activities.	5.2.1 Continue to promote existing public art across the Council region including projection art.	Ongoing
	5.2.2 Develop further mural art throughout the region specifically with a view to activating community and commercial spaces.	Years 2-5
	5.2.3 Include arts and cultural activity within major planning and infrastructure development initiatives e.g., open space planning, new library development etc.	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
	5.2.4 Encourage the presentation of live music, exhibition and performance within community spaces.	Ongoing
5.3 Enhance Heritage Offering	5.3.1 Pilot project which sees local history organisations working with contemporary artists to build audiences and membership and engages the community in storytelling.	Years 2-5
	5.3.2 Resource heritage space within new library to support changing installations which bring artists and historians together.	Years 2-3 / Ongoing
	5.3.3 Engage a part time Local History Officer to continue the digitisation project through History SA and Public Libraries SA to preserve content/artifacts and increase audience access.	Years 2-3

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DETAILED STRATEGY

6. Increased Participation in Community Arts and Cultural Activities

Encouraging participation in arts and cultural activities which support social connectedness, education and health and wellbeing outcomes.

Pillar: Arts and Cultural Activity Developoment

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
6.1 Increase arts and cultural programming	6.1.1 Leverage interest and engagement in sport and recreation and develop community in arts experiences relating to the culture and stories of local sporting groups.	Years 2-3
	6.1.2 Continue to develop and work with others / support arts and cultural initiatives which are affordable and accessible for people to participate in.	Ongoing
	6.1.3 Include community participation in the development of public art initiatives.	Ongoing
	6.1.4 Increase the capacity of artists and arts organisations to deliver workshops and other programs which are creative inclusive and accessible.	Years 2-3
	6.1.5 Deliver arts and cultural programs through library services including initiatives which are accessible and inclusive.	Ongoing
	6.1.6 Work with youth and schools to develop programs that support creative engagement of young people.	Ongoing
6.2 Increase Community arts and Cultural Development (CACD)	6.2.1 Increase the skills of staff across council to utilise CACD activities to achieve broader Council outcomes relating to sustainability, waste management, wellbeing, economic growth etc.	Years 2-3
	6.2.2 Present CACD training for social and community services and encourage the engagement of artists and arts activities which are accessible and inclusive and able to combat social isolation, improve health and wellbeing and education outcomes.	Years 2-3
	6.2.3 Foster partnerships with aged care services / developments to develop arts and cultural activities which support healthy aging and engagement.	Years 2-3

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RESOURCING STRATEGIES

The resourcing of the Loxton Waikerie District Arts and Culture Strategy requires diverse and innovative approaches by Council. The following provides a series of resourcing strategies that will support the implementation of the actions detailed in this plan. It is important to note that the actions will be staged over several years and resourcing can grow and change as required.

1. Appointment of an Arts Coordinator / Facilitator

Like the Arts Facilitator role, created through the Country Arts South Australia partnerships and Arts Coordinator will support the ongoing development of arts and culture in the region – for social, cultural and economic benefit. They would be responsible for the delivery of the strategies detailed in this plan and coordinate its implementation and evaluation long term. This role would increase the capacity of the communities across Council build networks, attract funding and help to form partnerships and connect Loxton Waikerie community with neighbouring councils and the broader arts and cultural industry across South Australia.

2. Partnerships

Partnerships with other agencies are integral to achieving the goals outlined in this plan. Working with others acknowledges the expertise that exists within the broader Riverland region and can provide strategic advantage in terms of marketing, resourcing and access to funding. Partnerships with neighbouring Councils, RDA, Schools, Riverland Tourism Service Clubs and the Chambers of Commerce. These partnerships also increase the capacity for the region to attract funding – see below.

3. Funding Diversity

Development of diverse funding streams will help support the Council to deliver this strategy. Commitment to leveraging internal budgetary allocations to access funding, to attract sponsorship and create income streams for arts and cultural activity. Applying for funding requires time and resourcing and this should be seen as an investment rather than an expense. For example, a redeveloped Waikerie Town Hall could include a private tenant that attracts income that can support community and cultural activities within the facility.

4. Other Options

Other options that are being developed by other Councils include the development of an Arts Levy, which directly supports arts and cultural programming. This has been instigated by the Sunshine Coast Council. The development of a Foundation, long term could also be worth considering, which can attract philanthropic and private donations with a deductible gift recipient status in place. Several Councils around Australia have established Foundations including Mount Gambier, Sunshine Coast and Albury City Council.

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APPENDIX

Consultation and Engagement

The following provides an overview of the community consultation that was undertaken to develop the Loxton Waikerie District Council Arts and Culture Plan.

Consultation

- Key Stakeholder Interviews (6 to date)
- Surveying (113 Respondents to date)
- Community Workshops (4 Sessions/36 Attendees)

Research

- Council and Regional Documents
- Place Exploration

Key Community Themes and Characteristics

- Starting to develop in terms of Arts + Culture
- Significant connection to the river and the environment – cultural, economic, social etc. identify as part of the Riverland.
- Food bowl – proud agricultural heritage both past and present – wine, citrus, almonds etc.
- Sporting community
- Connected within their own communities but divided across the Council area – Loxton connects with Berri and Barmera
- Value history – Lutheran, Multi-cultural, Soldier Settlement etc.
- Predominantly traditional and conservative with small pockets of progressives

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APPENDIX

Ideas Bank

The following includes a range of practical ideas that were gathered from the community via surveys and during the face-to-face consultation and engagement.

- Improve + activate spaces – Waikerie Institute, Foreshores, Community Theatre, the Precinct.
- Workshops and programs for skills development, health and wellbeing and social connections. For all ages but some specifically targeted at young people.
- Activation and support for cultural volunteers.
- Community Arts Projects focusing on story telling which include festival and event outcomes.
- Support for local and touring performing arts –live music, theatre, comedy etc.
- Events planning and development – taking a strategic approach, possibly in collaboration with other Riverland Councils.
- Continued support for arts and cultural development with an ongoing Arts Officer Role.
- Look to attract / develop major music festival e.g., Red Hot Summer Tour.
- Increase visibility of heritage – First Nations, Multicultural and Colonial – more interpretation.
- Leverage existing public art and create further works that enhance the towns and encourage people to explore.
- Development of Projection Art – telling River Stories – cultural tourism initiative.
- Increased capacity for artists to exhibit work.
- Re-use of the existing library space as a cultural space – once the new facility is completed.
- Development of Multi-purpose arts and cultural and interpretive space in Loxton – something at the end of East Terrace – connecting river front with CBD.
- Development of or reinvigoration of Hallmark event for the region – focus on something that celebrates region's heritage e.g., food bowl / agricultural industry, River / Bio-biodiversity, German / Lutheran heritage, First Nations culture.
- Partner with local business to stage events, program, workshops etc. Wineries, cafes, retailers, tourism operators etc.
- Better use of technology to enhance existing cultural engagement and create new opportunities – e.g., Story Towns initiative.
- Marketing and Comms strategy for arts and culture – improving networks and promotion of existing and new activities to the broader public and through Visitor Channels.
- Increase Cultural Tourism opportunities – permanent assets as well as experiences.
- Better enhance existing activities e.g., Mardi Gras, Christmas Pageant with locally created art content.
- Events kit in each of the major communities.
- Activities that link with the river – story telling tours that explore the river both from the shore and by boat.
- Reduce red tape for small groups / individuals wanting to develop activities / events.
- Foster live music culture – in conjunction with Music SA initiatives.
- Further leverage participation in state / national activities e.g., Fringe, History Festival, Guitar Festival, Harmony Week etc.
- Mentorships for artists – supporting creative industries.

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This plan has been developed by

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In collaboration with

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Country Arts SA

District Council of
Loxton Waikerie

COUNTRY ARTS SA

PLAY YOUR PART
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