



CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS ART GALLERY
**Strategic Plan
2023–2026**



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Acknowledgement of Country

Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges and extends appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are on. We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Executive summary

Our Vision is to become an innovative and inclusive regional Gallery.

For the past 25 years the Central Goldfields Art Gallery has been a vital and much celebrated hub for cultural life in Central Goldfields and the surrounding region. With the visionary redevelopment of the facility, as funded by the State Government and Council, the Gallery is entering an exciting and pivotal stage in its evolution.

The redevelopment successfully unites the original building of the 1861 Maryborough Fire Station with a contemporary approach that celebrates architectural excellence and provides a series of inspiring spaces, opening new vistas, perspectives and opportunities for the display and presentation of art in the Central Goldfields.

Our strategic planning provides a solid foundation to realise our Vision.

This *Gallery Strategic Plan 2023-2026* provides a roadmap for the next four years and aligns strongly with regional and local strategies. It includes a focus on cultural, social and economic priorities including the development of the local visitor economy. It outlines key directions for a growing audience, partnerships, expanded exhibition and associated programming, showcasing the permanent collection and further development of our education and public engagement to realise our Vision to:

- *Be an innovative and inclusive Public Art Gallery for the people of Central Goldfields Shire and surrounding region.*
- *Engage, inspire and challenge our audience through visual arts exhibitions and programs.*
- *Achieve standards of excellence in all that we do.*
- *Connect with both our community and a broad range of visitors.*
- *Contribute to an evolving understanding of Australian cultural identity.*

Through research, community engagement activities and analysis, five strategic directions have emerged as key areas of focus for this Strategic Plan:

- Strategic direction one: Develop and deliver a high-quality annual exhibition program for our community.
- Strategic direction two: Develop and deliver an engaging education and public program.
- Strategic direction three: Market the Gallery to key stakeholders and a wide range of audiences
- Strategic direction four: Maintain, develop and increase access to the permanent art collection.
- Strategic direction five: Achieve increased resourcing to sustainably manage and deliver the Gallery vision.

An ambitious but realistic timeline for implementation of the strategic directions is included in this Plan to support the realisation of the Gallery Vision over the next four years.

The benefits for our community and local businesses are many.

The Gallery has built an exceptional set of connections with its local community. This Plan ensures an ongoing inclusive approach which showcases the creativity, cultural identity and resourcefulness of the local community, alongside artists of national and international significance.

The community will be supported to grow and to be an integral part of realising the potential of the Gallery as a regional attraction, which is proud of its economic, social and cultural vitality and its contribution to the national conversation about place and identity.

1. About the people and the place

1.1 The heart of the Central Goldfields

Central Goldfields Shire is situated within the boundaries of Dja Dja Wurrung country. It is centrally located between the rapidly growing centres of Ballarat and Bendigo and sits at the heart of the Victorian Central Goldfields region, which is subject to an exciting bid to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Art Gallery is located in Maryborough, the Shire's major business centre and regional hub, and sits adjacent to fine buildings dating from the goldrush period. It is also directly opposite the Maryborough District Hospital and within walking distance from the iconic Maryborough Railway Station, which is undergoing significant reactivation with increased train services, a state-of-the-art interactive visitor experience centre and a creative arts hub. The Station and the Civic Square in which the Gallery is located, are the strategic "bookends" of Maryborough's central spine and frame a unique streetscape within the broader region.

Maryborough is well connected with the townships of Central Goldfields Shire including Dunolly to the north and Talbot to the south as well as surrounding regional towns including Castlemaine, St Arnaud and Avoca.

1.2 An aspiring community who value the arts

Central Goldfields Shire's population of 13,483 (2021) is mostly concentrated within Maryborough and while Central Goldfields is recognised as having significant social and economic disadvantages, it is also strong in community pride, creativity and resilience.

Art galleries and museums play a major role in Australia's social, cultural and economic well-being. The value of the arts and culture is outlined by (UNESCO) "*...from cherished historic monuments and museums to living heritage practices and contemporary art forms, culture enriches our lives in countless ways and helps build inclusive, innovative and resilient communities*" (Source, [Culture | UNESCO](#)). The links between arts and health are becoming increasingly well documented and are identified by VicHealth as contributing to (Source, [Arts and culture \(vichealth.vic.gov.au\)](#)):

- Strengthening community connection
- Providing platforms for less prominent voices
- Providing opportunities for bringing people together to develop creative solutions to health promotion challenges.

The Gallery plays a significant role in promoting and celebrating creativity and building social connectedness and wellbeing in the Central Goldfields. It attracts high levels of interest and participation in its exhibitions, programs and activities, and has close links with the community through the local schools' network, and a range of partnerships with community organisations representing diverse ages and interests.

The region is moving towards a flourishing future with a diversity of artistic practice in Maryborough and surrounding townships and a range of community led initiatives such as the annual Tiny Towns Arts Trail.



1.3 Our heritage foundations and growing tourism and visitation

Situated within the original Maryborough Fire Station building dating back to 1861, the Gallery has undergone a transformative \$2.7 million redevelopment and expansion, funded by State Government and Council. Completed in 2022, the Gallery now meets contemporary public gallery standards for a rich presentation of art and programs. The redevelopment provides multiple opportunities to engage and interact with the community and from 2024 the Gallery will also feature an Indigenous Interpretive Garden developed in partnership with the local Traditional Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung. The Garden will reference traditional fire practices and local significant sites, anchoring the space to its broader environment and cultural context.

There are indications that the Central Goldfields area is increasingly being recognised as a base for artists and creative practitioners, made attractive through its relative affordability and increasing links to neigh-

bouring regional towns including Castlemaine, and as a convenient location midway between the cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. With its significant heritage assets and the development of activation and interpretation across the region, visitation will continue to grow over the next four years. Growth in the Gallery's activities and its reach will support the visitor economy and the regional arts and cultural ecosystem.

The Goldfields region attracts many visitors to see the historic buildings and townships that date back to the 1850s and the rapid development of a prosperous gold mining industry, as well as attracting visitors interested in nature, food and arts and cultural experiences. Maryborough is an integral part of the Goldfields Way Touring Route between Ballarat and Bendigo, which also takes in the historic townships of Creswick, Clunes, Talbot, Maryborough and Dunolly.

Image:

Photographer John Gollings.

2. Our strategic context

The strategic directions of the Gallery are closely aligned with the Purpose of the Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2021–2025 which is:

To seek, capture and develop opportunities to make our Shire a place of choice to live, work, visit and enjoy.

Council has developed an integrated suite of strategies and plans across key domains which map the journey from where we are now to where we aspire to be in 2031. This Plan is a vital and creative contributor to this work including in the following key areas:

Tourism and Economic Development

The Central Goldfields Shire Council Economic Development Strategy (2020–2025) recognises the important role of arts and culture:

- Supporting the emerging role of arts and culture in the Shire presents an opportunity to positively influence and shape the narrative and identity of the region, to improve liveability and social inclusion outcomes for current residents, as well as attract new residents and visitors to the Shire.

The Central Goldfields Tourism and Events Strategy (2020–2025) identifies key themes to develop product, activation and interpretation which resonate strongly with the strategic directions for the Gallery:

- Shift the Narrative around the Shire’s Identity and Perception (Key theme one)
- Enhance and Reinterpret the Gold Story (Key theme three)
- Support and Leverage the Emerging Arts & Culture Sector (Key theme four)
- Revitalise Assets, Infrastructure and Accommodation (Key theme five)
- Provide a Contemporary Approach to Marketing and Visitor Services (Key theme seven)

Community Wellbeing

Strategic Priorities within the Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2021–2025 also acknowledge the central role of culture, creativity and people including:

- Nurture and celebrate creativity.
- Value, celebrate and actively engage First Nations culture and people.



Image:

Jennifer Latch leading a children’s program in the exhibition, *Dean Bowen: Ladder to the Stars*, 2023. Photo courtesy Calai Creative.

Key National and State government policies and strategies

The Australian Government released its five-year National Cultural Policy *Revive* (2023) to revive the arts in Australia. At the heart of this policy is the goal to ensure there is a place for every story, and a story for every place. The five integrated pillars are:

1. First Nations First
2. A Place for Every Story
3. Centrality of the Artist
4. Strong Cultural Infrastructure
5. Engaging the Audience

The Victorian State Government also recognises that creativity and access are vital for all. The Creative State Strategy 2025 envisions Victoria as a “*State where creative people, ideas and enterprises thrive, and where everyone has equitable access to and benefits from a rich creative culture.*”

3. About the gallery

3.1 Multiple histories within a fascinating site

The Gallery represents significant layers of local history and culture. Located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country, it is located within one of Maryborough's oldest buildings, the fire station, which was established in 1861. The station's fire bell was added in 1862 to muster the volunteer fire brigade to respond to the growing number of fires in the region during the goldrush, ringing out at 1pm every day for the gold diggers working within a four-mile range of the town. One hundred and sixty years later, the Gallery now provides a lens for the whole community to understand geological, environmental, First Nations, and contemporary histories of Maryborough and surrounds.

A timeline of the uses of the building and its development as a Gallery can be found in Appendix 7.2



Image: Central Goldfields Art Gallery fire tower.

3.2 Our exhibition and programming focus

The Gallery features a diverse program of regularly changing exhibitions including works from the permanent collection, touring exhibitions and curated exhibitions.

Our exhibitions program includes:

- Touring exhibitions from regional, state and national public art galleries
- A changing display of art works from the permanent collection
- Curated exhibitions based around themes and collection areas that relate to the Central Victorian region and beyond.
- Exhibitions from leading artists from the shire and the broader Central Victorian region

Following the revitalisation of the Gallery completed in 2022, exhibitions will be presented across the following key spaces:

- The Engine Room – this is the largest of the three exhibition spaces, and its name relates to the part of the Old Fire Station where the fire engine trucks were once parked.
- The Cambrian Room – an intimate space in which to appreciate a changing selection of works including works from the permanent collection.
- The Ramp Space – this central area will support a wide range of smaller exhibitions and displays.

Public art elements by Dja Dja Wurrung artists will also be an integral part of the Indigenous Interpretive Garden immediately adjacent to the Gallery.



3.3 Our permanent art collection

The Gallery's permanent collection is young but growing. The collection now numbers nearly 200 artworks with a focus on works of art that relate to the Central Goldfields region. Notable artists from the region include Aunty Marilynne Nicholls, Dean Bowen and Noel Tunks. The collection also includes a focus on contemporary Australian art quilts which relate to the textile history of the region. This unique collection is added to every two years through the hosting of the national art quilt award, with the winning work acquired and accessioned into the permanent collection.

There are a number of works that sit outside the key collecting focus areas, including paintings by notable Australian artists including Arthur Boyd and Ray Crooke. These works of excellence by leading Australian artists help to give a broader context for telling the story of the history of Australian art and for the development of art locally.

In 2021 collection records were transferred to the industry standard Vernon collections database system. The Gallery was one of the first regional galleries in Australia to partner with the international collection's platform Google Arts and Culture. As a result of digitising the collection in this way, the Gallery's collection is now part of an international platform that enables access to it from anywhere in the world.

In 2022 the collection was valued at \$612,000, more than doubling its value since 2006. The inclusion of a dedicated space for displaying works from the permanent collection demonstrates the growing importance of the collection, and the growing pride and interest in the development of a unique permanent art collection by the Council. Reviewing and updating the Gallery's Collection Policy, including a framework for collection acquisitions, will help refine this important aspect of gallery work.

The Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program has enabled the collection to grow in value and significance. Since 2019, ten works of art have been acquired from leading Australian landscape artist and Central Victorian resident, Jeff Makin and internationally recognised, Maryborough born artist Dean Bowen, to a total value of \$88,100.

The Gallery has embarked on a direction to build the representation of First Nations artists in the collection. The 2021 commission of a woven basket by internationally recognised artist Aunty Marilynne Nicholls is a first step in this direction. Aunty Marilynne Nicholls created this artwork specifically for the Gallery based on the form of a nest. It is intended to support hope and healing within the community. Public art elements by Dja Dja Wurrung artists will also be an integral part of the Indigenous Interpretive Garden immediately adjacent to the Gallery.

3.4 Our resources

Central Goldfields Shire Council provides significant support for the Gallery as a highly valued and integrated service. Expertise and resources are drawn from across multiple departments including marketing and communications, tourism and events, economic development, buildings and maintenance, human resources, information technology and finance. Council's current financial and in-kind support is worth over \$300,000 per annum.

The Gallery team consists of a total of 2.19 EFT staff whose roles focus on program coordination, curation, exhibition installation, marketing, facility management, public programs, education and support of the volunteer program. There is an opportunity to review Gallery resourcing levels in line with recommendations by the Public Galleries Association of Victoria industry benchmark standards which indicate 3.5 EFT + casual staff for a gallery of this size.

In addition to professional staff, the Gallery has approximately 18 active volunteers. The interest in the Gallery's volunteer program has continued to grow even over the period of the Gallery's closure for redevelopment, defying overall trends for volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic and demonstrating growing community commitment to the Gallery. A volunteer training program has been introduced to build skills and at the same time support social connectedness and community pride.

The Gallery continues to grow its partnerships with education, business and community organisations keen to support the Gallery in multiple ways.

Since 2020 a wide range of external grants have been secured to support the Gallery. In addition to the major State and Council investment in the revitalisation works for the Gallery in 2022, external grants have enabled a range of developments including the digitisation of the permanent collection and increased access to the permanent collection through the purchase of new display cases and collection storage racks in addition to a new standalone Gallery website as part of the increased focus on marketing the Gallery.

Image – opposite page:

Aunty Marilyn Nicholls, Untitled (basket) 2021-2022, Emu feathers, plant fibre and pigment. Central Goldfields Art Gallery Collection.
© Aunty Marilyn Nicholls.

Image – right:

Gallery interior. Photographer John Gollings.

The Gallery does not currently receive operational funding support through Creative Victoria's Regional Partnerships Program. This program provided funding from \$40,000 to \$120,000 per annum to Victorian regional public galleries based on 2020 data. The Gallery meets high programming standards and aspires to enter the stable of funded galleries helping to realise the vision of the Creative State Strategy.

There are a range of other potential opportunities to increase the Gallery's resources encompassing merchandising, fundraising, memberships and sponsorship. Opportunities to apply for grant funding to support projects that help achieve the Gallery Vision will continue to be applied for, building on the successful track record in obtaining grants over the last three years. Opportunities include funding to support the education service through national programs including the Regional Arts Fund, and State Government programs including the Victorian Government's Department of Education and Training Strategic Partnership Program and through Creative Victoria and Regional Development Victoria.





4. Direction – where we want to be

4.1 Our vision

Central Goldfields Art Gallery will:

- Be an innovative and inclusive public Art Gallery for the people of Central Goldfields Shire and surrounding region.
- Engage, inspire and challenge our audience through visual arts exhibitions and programs.
- Achieve standards of excellence in what we do.
- Connect with both our community and a broad range of visitors.
- Contribute to an evolving understanding of Australian cultural identity

4.2 Our values

- Professional standards in the care and presentation of visual arts
- Inclusiveness, creativity, accessibility and respect in how we go about our work.
- Sustainability in our approaches and innovation in achieving diverse forms of support to deliver the Gallery program.
- We are ethical and supportive in how we work with creatives. We respect the role of artists in the community and their ownership of specific stories and ideas.
- We follow correct protocols when working with First Nations and the work of First Nations' artists.

4.3 Our statement of purpose

We aim to:

- Be a premier public art gallery for the region, upholding national public gallery standards to engage and inspire audiences through the presentation of a diverse exhibition program.
- Inform and share knowledge with audiences by developing and delivering a diverse range of educational and public programs that connect people and art.
- Collect, preserve and make accessible a permanent collection for the benefit of current and future generations.
- Ensure the Gallery is sustainable and well-managed.
- Contribute social and economic benefit to our community through exhibitions, collections and programs. Be accountable and transparent in what we do and demonstrate the positive impact of our work.

4.4 Our strategic directions

This plan is based on five key strategic directions which support the realisation of our Vision:

1. Develop and deliver a high-quality annual exhibition program for our community.
2. Develop and deliver an engaging education and public program.
3. Market the Gallery to key stakeholders and a wide range of audiences
4. Maintain, develop and increase access to the permanent art collection.
5. Achieve increased resourcing to sustainably manage and deliver the Gallery vision.

Image – opposite page:

Dean Bowen, Perching Magpie 2016 (detail), oil on board, 100cm × 100cm.
Central Goldfields Art Gallery Collection. © Dean Bowen.

Reproduced with permission of the artist.

5. How we will get there

5.1 Strategic direction one: Develop and deliver a high-quality annual exhibition program for our community

Key strategies

- 5.1.1 Develop and implement programming guidelines for the three exhibition spaces – the Engine Room (touring and self-curated exhibitions), Cambrian Room (including exhibition of works from the permanent collection and elsewhere) and the Ramp Space (including exhibitions by local artists and from other sources)
- 5.1.2 Launch an annual exhibition program by November of each preceding year.
- 5.1.3 Provide a balance of First Nations, local, regional and national artists in the program.
- 5.1.4 Present a mix of self-curated and touring exhibitions.
- 5.1.5 Draw on the collections, resources and expertise of the broader public galleries network to support the program.
- 5.1.6 Encourage and provide advice for local artists seeking opportunities to show their work in other Council managed and non-Council locations across the Shire

5.2 Strategic direction two: Develop and deliver an engaging education and public program

Key strategies

- 5.2.1 Advocate for resources to support and expand the delivery of education and public programs.
- 5.2.2 Deliver an overview of the exhibition calendar to educators and the wider community in November every year to assist them in integrating the Gallery's activities into their planning for the following year.
- 5.2.3 Present a diverse range of exhibition, visual arts and collection based public programs for the non-school sector.
- 5.2.4 Develop collaborations and cross promotion with other Council services with shared objectives including Library and Youth Services
- 5.2.5 Instil a love of the arts in young people and present innovative and fun life-long learning programs that increase education and socialisation for people at all stages of life

5.3 Strategic direction three: Market the Gallery to key stakeholders and a wide range of audiences

Key strategies

- 5.3.1 Implement an annual marketing plan.
- 5.3.2 Refine and communicate the Gallery's brand including a review of the name of the Gallery and a style guide.
- 5.3.3 Broaden and increase Gallery visitation to 7,500 visitors by 2023/2024 with a 5% increase each year until 2026.
- 5.3.4 Improve evaluation methods to further build the Gallery's profile and audiences.
- 5.3.5 Become a central player in the Central Goldfields visitor experience with strong links between the Gallery and the Maryborough Railway Station

5.4 Strategic direction four: Maintain, develop and increase access to the permanent art collection

Key strategies

- 5.4.1 Seek funding to support collections management.
- 5.4.2 Complete a Standard Facility Report to support opportunities for the Gallery to be considered as a potential venue by state and national touring exhibitions and to attract loans of artworks.
- 5.4.3 Review the Collections Policy
- 5.4.4 Introduce a 4-yearly valuation of the collection to comply with industry standards.
- 5.4.5 Ensure the collection is appropriately housed, stored and displayed.

5.5 Strategic direction five: Achieve increased resourcing to sustainably manage and deliver the Gallery vision

Key strategies

- 5.5.1 Advocate to State Government to gain recurrent operational funding through Creative Victoria to support the Gallery to achieve its vision and key directions.
- 5.5.2 Identify and apply for relevant State, Federal and philanthropic grants to support strategic directions.
- 5.5.3 Encourage financial support and donations to the Gallery through online giving platforms and through the Deductible Gift Recipient program.
- 5.5.4 Maximise opportunities for revenue and fundraising including Gallery membership, donations, sponsorship, merchandise and events.
- 5.5.5 Manage and develop stakeholder relations across the arts sector, neighbouring galleries, and key education, community representative organisations to support the Vision.
- 5.5.6 Establish a community engagement mechanism through the Central Goldfields Shire Council to inform and support the Gallery program and services.
- 5.5.7 Minimise the environmental footprint of Central Goldfields Art Gallery

6. Action plan

Central Goldfields Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2023–2026	Strategic direction one: Develop and deliver a high-quality annual exhibition program for our community	Strategic direction two: Develop and deliver an engaging education and public program
<p>2023/2024</p>	<p>5.1.1 Develop and implement programming guidelines for the three gallery spaces</p> <p>5.1.2 Launch an annual exhibition program by November of each preceding year</p> <p>5.1.3 Provide a balance of First Nations, regional and national artists in the program</p> <p>5.1.4 Present a mix of self-curated and touring exhibitions</p> <p>5.1.5 Draw on the collections, resources and expertise of the broader public galleries network to support the program</p> <p>5.1.6 Encourage and provide advice for local artists seeking opportunities to show their work in other Council managed and non-Council locations across the Shire.</p>	<p>5.2.1 Advocate for resources to support and expand the delivery of education and public programs</p> <p>5.2.2 Deliver an overview of the exhibition calendar to educators and the wider community in November every year to assist them in integrating the Gallery's activities into their planning for the following year</p> <p>5.2.3 Present a diverse range of exhibition, visual arts and collection based public programs for the non-school sector</p> <p>5.2.5 Instil a love of the arts in young people and present innovative and fun life-long learning programs that increase education and socialisation for people at all stages of life.</p>
<p>2024/2025</p>	<p>5.1.2 Launch an annual exhibition program by November of each preceding year</p> <p>5.1.3 Provide a balance of First Nations, regional and national artists</p> <p>5.1.4 Present a mix of self-curated and touring exhibitions</p> <p>5.1.5 Draw on the collections, resources and expertise of the broader public galleries network to support the program</p> <p>5.1.6 Encourage and provide advice for local artists seeking opportunities to show their work in other Council managed and non-Council locations across the Shire.</p>	<p>5.2.2 Deliver an overview of the exhibition calendar to educators and the wider community in November every year to assist them in integrating the Gallery's activities into their planning for the following year</p> <p>5.2.3 Present a diverse range of exhibition, visual arts and collection based public programs for the non-school sector</p> <p>5.2.5 Instil a love of the arts in young people and present innovative and fun life-long learning programs to increase education and socialisation for people at all stages of life.</p>

Strategic direction three: Market the Gallery to key stakeholders and a wide range of audiences	Strategic direction four: Maintain, develop and increase access to the permanent art collection	Strategic direction five: Achieve increased resourcing to sustainably manage and deliver the Gallery vision
<p>5.3.1 Implement an annual marketing plan</p> <p>5.3.2 Refine and communicate the Gallery's brand including a review of the name of the Gallery and a style guide</p> <p>5.3.3 Broaden and increase Gallery visitation to 7,500 visitors by 2023/2024 with a 5% increase each year until 2026</p>	<p>5.4.1 Seek funding to support collections management</p> <p>5.4.2 Complete a Standard Facility Report to support opportunities for the Gallery to be considered as a potential venue by state and national touring exhibitions and to attract loans of artworks</p> <p>5.4.3 Review the Collections Policy</p>	<p>5.5.1 Advocate to State Government for ongoing operational funding for the Gallery to achieve sustainability and the realisation of the Gallery's vision</p> <p>5.5.4 Maximise opportunities for revenue and fundraising including Gallery membership, donations, sponsorship, merchandise and events</p> <p>5.5.5 Manage and develop stakeholder relations across the arts sector, neighbouring galleries, and key education, community representative organisations to support the vision</p> <p>5.5.7 Minimise the environmental footprint of Central Goldfields Art Gallery</p>
<p>5.3.3 Increase Gallery visitation by 5%</p>	<p>5.4.5 Ensure the collection is appropriately housed, stored and displayed</p>	<p>5.5.2 Identify and apply for relevant State, Federal and philanthropic grants to support strategic directions</p> <p>5.5.3 Encourage financial support and donations to the Gallery through online giving platforms and through the Deductible Gift Recipient program</p> <p>5.5.4 Grow revenue and fundraising including Gallery membership, donations, sponsorship, merchandise and events</p> <p>5.5.5 Manage and develop stakeholder relations across the arts sector, neighbouring galleries, and key education, community representative organisations to support the vision</p> <p>5.5.6 Continue to strengthen community engagement to inform and support the Gallery program and services</p>

6. Action plan

Central Goldfields Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2023–2026	Strategic direction one: Develop and deliver a high-quality annual exhibition program for our community	Strategic direction two: Develop and deliver an engaging education and public program
<p>2025/2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1.2 Launch an annual exhibition program by November of each preceding year 5.1.3 Provide a balance of First Nations, regional and national artists 5.1.4 Present a mix of self-curated and touring exhibitions 5.1.5 Draw on the collections, resources and expertise of the broader public galleries network to support the program 5.1.6 Encourage and provide advice for local artists seeking opportunities to show their work in other Council managed and non-Council locations across the Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.2.2 Deliver an overview of the exhibition calendar to educators and the wider community in November every year to assist them integrating the Gallery's activities into their planning for the following year 5.2.3 Present a diverse range of exhibition, visual arts and collection based public programs for the non-school sector 5.2.5 Instil a love of the arts in young people and present innovative and fun life-long learning programs to increase education and socialisation for people at all stages of life

Strategic direction three: Market the Gallery to key stakeholders and a wide range of audiences	Strategic direction four: Maintain, develop and increase access to the permanent art collection	Strategic direction five: Achieve increased resourcing to sustainably manage and deliver the Gallery vision
<p>5.3.3 Increase Gallery visitation by 5%</p>	<p>5.4.4 Introduce a 4-yearly valuation of the collection to comply with industry standards</p>	<p>5.5.2 Identify and apply for relevant State, Federal and philanthropic grants to support strategic directions</p> <p>5.5.4 Grow revenue and fundraising including Gallery membership, donations, sponsorship, merchandise and events</p> <p>5.5.5 Manage and develop stakeholder relations across the arts sector, neighbouring galleries, and key education, community representative organisations to support the vision</p>

7. Appendix

7.1 Our Strategic Context – Council’s Plans and Strategies

The following chart indicates how the *Central Goldfields Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2023–2026* aligns with multiple Council plans and strategies:

Central Goldfields Shire Council Plans and Strategies	CGSC Strategic Objective:			
	Our Community's Wellbeing	Our Growing Economy	Our Spaces and Places	Leading Change
Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2021–2025	✓	✓	✓	✓
Central Goldfields Shire Council 2031 Vision	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tourism and Events Strategy 2020–2025	✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic Development Strategy 2020–2025	✓	✓	✓	✓
Priority Project Plans			✓	
Volunteer Strategy & Action Plan 2021–2024	✓			✓
Communications & Engagement Strategy 2021–2022	✓			✓
Positive Ageing Strategy 2021–2026	✓			
Every Child, Every Chance, Go Goldfields Initiative	✓			

7.2 History of the building and the development of the Gallery

The process of developing this Plan provided the opportunity to bring together multiple histories of the site, informed by knowledge held by the Midlands and District Historical Society. There is strong community and visitor interest in the history of the building and its many stories. Key milestones in the history of this building are documented below:

Date	Milestone
1861	The original fire station was established on its current site, within the historic precinct around McLandress Square, Maryborough.
1982	The Maryborough Country Fire Authority handed back the old fire station to what was then called Maryborough City Council. The Fire Station was used during this time to store Council records.
1996	Central Goldfields Art Gallery was officially opened by Central Goldfields Shire Council in the old fire station building where it has operated from ever since.
1996–2020	The Gallery establishes and grows in stature as a public art gallery over this period. The Gallery was accepted as a member of the Public Galleries Association of Victoria. The Golden Textures Contemporary Art Quilt Award was established in 2013 as a national award based on the rich textile history of the region. The Gallery's permanent collection slowly develops based around art works with a relationship to the Central Goldfields region.
May 2020	Central Goldfields Shire Council is granted \$500,000 from the Victorian State Government, through the Regional Infrastructure Program for Stage 1 of the Gallery redevelopment. Council supplements this funding with \$273,000.
2021	Central Goldfields Shire Council is granted \$1.2 million funding from the Victorian State Government for Stages 2 and 3 of the Gallery redevelopment through the Regional Tourism Investment Fund.
June 2022	Central Goldfields Shire Council is granted \$225,000 funding from the Victorian State Government for Stages 2 and 3 of the Indigenous Interpretive Garden from the 2022/2023 Victorian State Budget. Council supplements this funding with \$75,000.
June 2022	Central Goldfields Shire Council is granted \$355,215 funding for Collections Access from the Victorian State Government's Creative Victoria Regional Collections Access Program. Council supplements this funding with \$35,000.
March 2023	Re-opening of the Gallery following a major redevelopment designed by award winning Melbourne based architectural firm Nervegna Reed. The Gallery is expanded to include a new space to display works from the permanent collection, a new and welcoming reception area, an upgraded exhibition space capable of presenting major exhibitions from major public galleries, a smaller exhibition space and a space for art making and learning; with a special focus on young people. The facility is fully accessible and the exhibition spaces and collection store meet environmental standards required to store, present and enable exhibitions and loans of art from external agencies enabling a rich diversity of artistic programming.

7.3 Developing the Central Goldfields Art Gallery Draft Strategic Plan 2023–2026

A series of consultations held between May 2022 and January 2023 formed part of the research and background into the development of Central Goldfields Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2023–2026. A workshop was held with Councillors and consultations were held with community representatives including a Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, and members of the arts communities including those from Talbot, Bealiba and Dunolly, local art educators and a representative from the disability sector.

A range of staff from across Council were involved in consultations, including members of the Community Wellbeing department (Art Gallery, Library, Youth Services) and Economic Development, along with Community Engagement and Finance staff.

John Sedunary, Chair of the Committee for Maryborough provided pro bono advice on the development of the Strategy; Jan Boynton, Chair, Bendigo Art Gallery Board provided strategic advice on format; Anne Robertson, Executive Officer of the Public Galleries Association of Victoria provided industry information and benchmarking statistics and resources.

Consistent themes came through in the consultations including: the importance of participation and access in the Gallery program from the local and broader community, cross programming opportunities with other departments of Central Goldfields Shire Council, the importance of evaluation in demonstrating the impact of work undertaken and the emphasis on marketing and communications to ensure high level awareness and visitation. Following is a summary of themes from the consultations undertaken.

MISSION	ACCESS	WELL-BEING	PROGRAMMING	TOURISM	SUSTAINABILITY	MARKETING
Central Goldfields Art Gallery is one of the services that promotes inspirational/aspirational aspects of the community.	Accessibility and inclusion for all within the Central Goldfields Shire Council community is important – opportunity to broaden young adult participation in the Gallery programs through VicHealth funding.	Important to demonstrate the link between involvement with a public art gallery and wellbeing.	Dja Dja Wurrung artists – important to highlight in the Gallery	Linkages between the Maryborough Railway redevelopment and Gallery need to be strong	Essential to increase resourcing of the Gallery.	Essential to evaluate the impact of work in order to advocate for increased resourcing
Education is critical part of the Gallery service	Art Teachers network is a useful conduit for communication Excursions for schools are important – Gallery outreach would be good too		Cross programming between the Library and Gallery is useful Important to present the work of artists from outside the region as well		Essential to make resourcing sustainable – e.g. opportunity to extend volunteering opportunities	Present exhibition calendar in November of the preceding year to educators to support their forward planning
	Partnership with disability sector is important. What's happening already is good so build on this.		Important to keep knowledge of local demographics upfront in planning.			Importance of marketing in meeting the vision of the Gallery

Image – opposite page: Sue Reid, *Australian Print* (detail), 2019. Hand painted, hand embroidered and machine quilted using acrylic paint, cotton fabric, wool and polyester wadding and embroidery thread. 1240 × 1050mm. © Sue Reid. Reproduced with permission of the artist.



