


# **Attachment B**

**Achievements and Highlights - Creative  
City Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-  
2024**

# Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014–2024



Achievements  
and highlights



The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area. We acknowledge their continued care for the lands and waters of this place and continued connections to Country.

We deliver our cultural strategy in the context of the world's oldest, continuous, living cultures – those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – and we pay our respects to their Elders both past and present.

## Lord Mayor's Message

In 2014 we launched the City of Sydney's first comprehensive cultural policy and action plan, which we called Creative City.

I'm enormously proud of what we achieved for our communities as we delivered this plan. We made an average investment in culture of \$34M each year, including our events, cultural programs, art projects and commissions, and the grant funding we provide to fuel local creativity.

This investment supported over 34 million interactions with culture and thousands of opportunities for Sydney's artists to make creative work and be paid for it. We also

delivered an inspiring program of public art and a growing portfolio of vital creative spaces, embedding creativity into the fabric of our city.

We have produced this document to reflect on some of the highlights and achievements of Creative City and to record the legacy of our first cultural policy. It is just a snapshot of the thousands of projects, programs and daily creative activities we've delivered, but it demonstrates the breadth and ambition of our work to support the cultural life of our city.

And that work continues. We will sustain this ongoing investment in culture and take what we have learned in the past ten years to sharpen our focus in the years ahead to maintain, elevate and celebrate culture and creativity in Sydney.



*Clover Moore*

**Clover Moore AO**  
Lord Mayor of Sydney

# Reflecting on Creative City – our first cultural policy

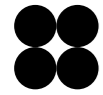
We've achieved a lot for our communities in the 10 years since we released our *Creative City* cultural policy and action plan.

Each year we've made an average investment of \$34 million in culture. This includes our events, cultural programs, art projects and commissions, and the grant funding we provide to fuel local creativity. Our investment enabled:

The Creative City plan was guided by our long-term vision Sustainable Sydney 2030, which identified a cultural and creative city as a key strategic direction.

When we drafted our cultural policy and action plan in 2014, we invited feedback from a wide range of people.

We held **34 forums** and received feedback from 1,400 members of the public and **626 artists and creative workers**. We received 72 written submissions from theatres, cultural venues, arts organisations and other groups. When we exhibited the plan, a **2,114** more people responded.



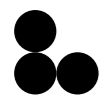
Total Recorded Attendance

34.2mil



Attendance to grant funded activities

15.3mil



14,628 opportunities for Sydney-based artists, with an **average artist fee of \$919** per opportunity



Attendance to Cultural Programs

103,341



Attendance to Libraries

6.8mil



A property portfolio valued at **\$43.9m** providing **8,300m<sup>2</sup>** of creative space to **41 cultural tenants**



Attendance to Creative Spaces

814,924



Attendance to our Events and Festivals

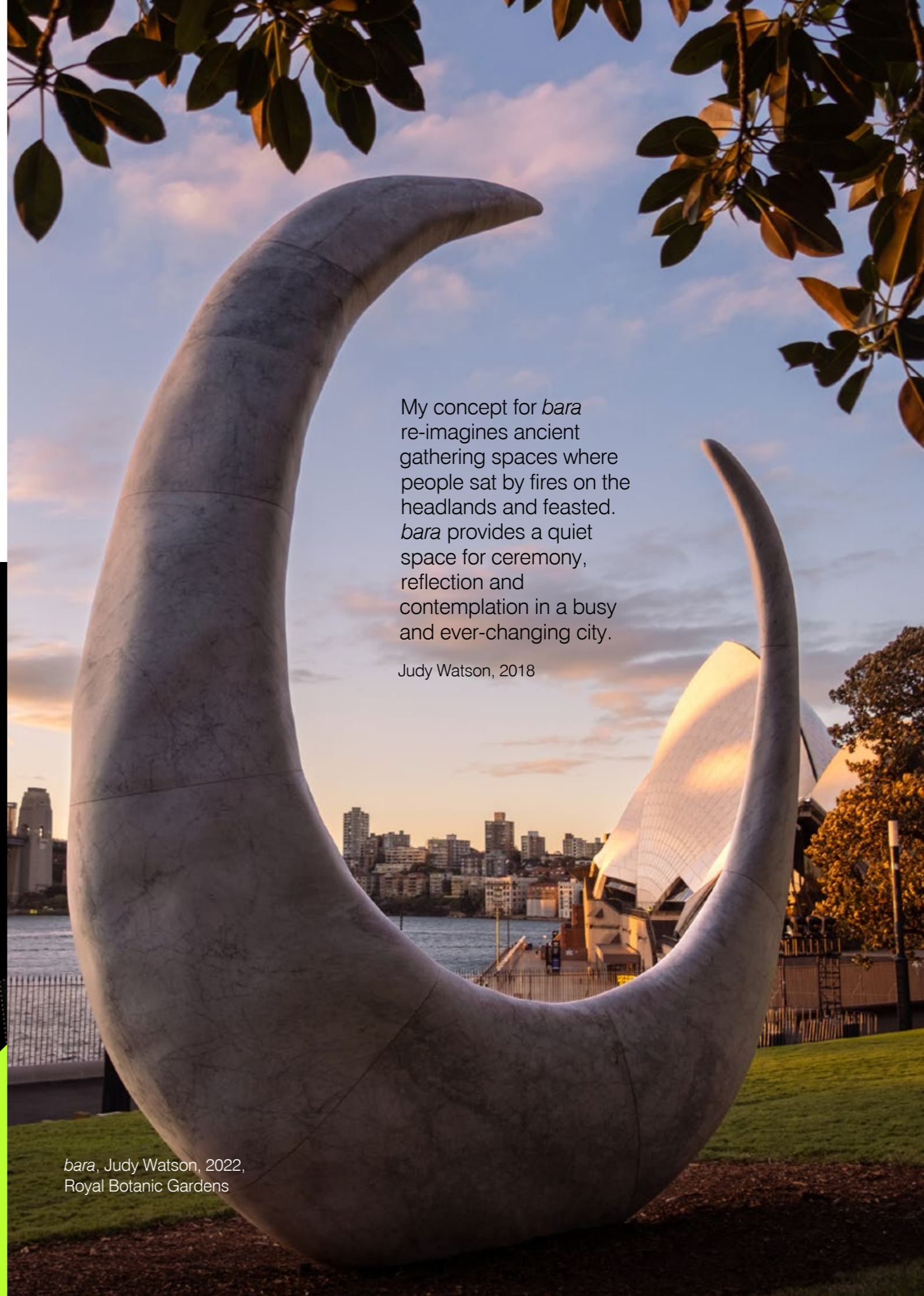
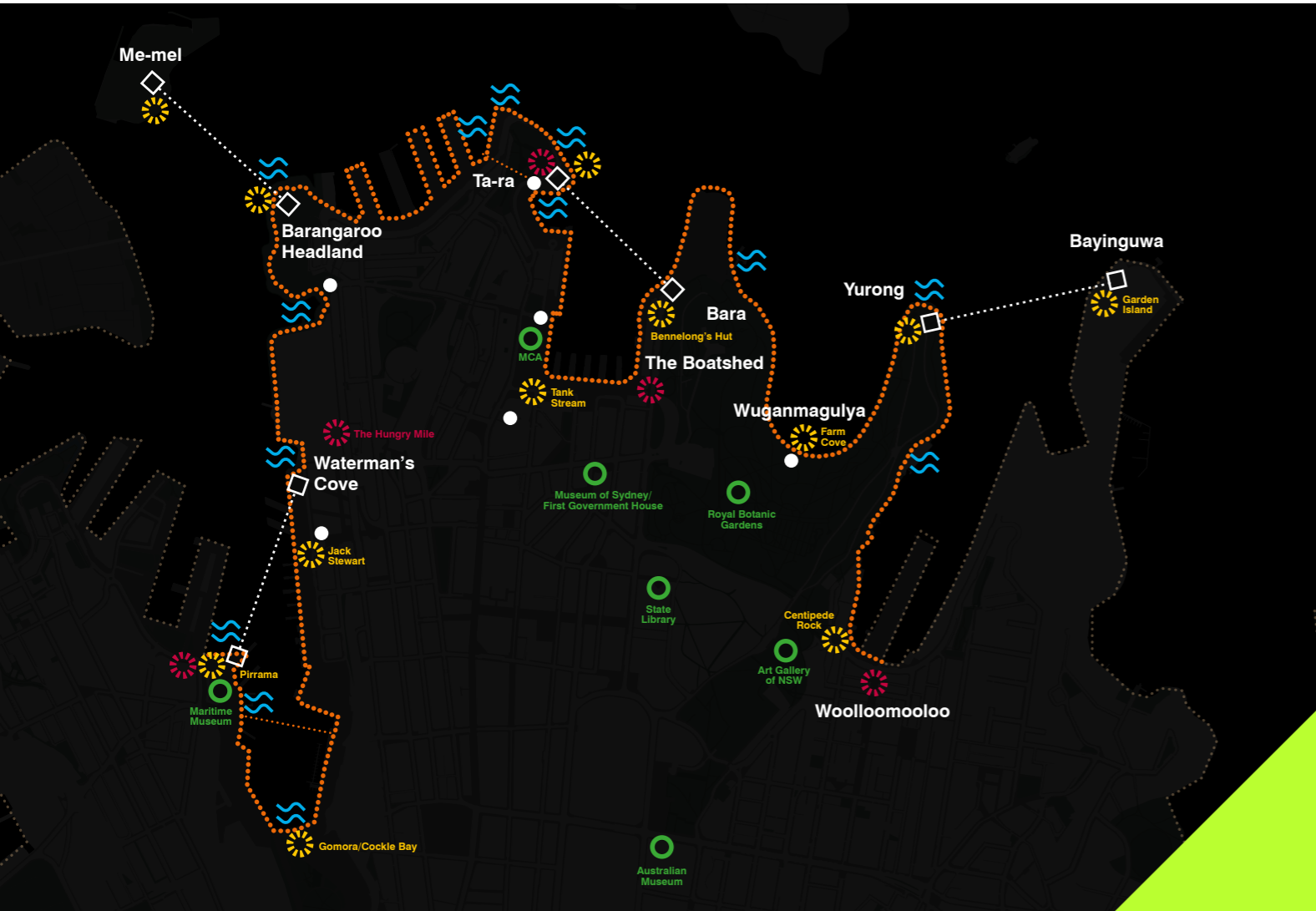
8.8mil



# Sharing First Nations stories and living culture

**Our communities wanted** to share the stories and history of our community, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and contemporary expression of First Nations people's living cultures.

▼ *Yananurala*: Walking on Country is a nine-kilometre walk that highlights Aboriginal history and culture at places along the Sydney harbour foreshore.



My concept for *bara* re-imagines ancient gathering spaces where people sat by fires on the headlands and feasted. *bara* provides a quiet space for ceremony, reflection and contemplation in a busy and ever-changing city.

Judy Watson, 2018

*bara*, Judy Watson, 2022, Royal Botanic Gardens



### Eora Journey

We allocated \$7 million towards the groundbreaking Eora Journey program, meaning 'people's journey' in the Sydney Aboriginal language. The program celebrates the living culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In 2018 we commissioned curator Emily McDaniel to provide recommendations for a storytelling walk as part of the project.

The resulting 9km *Yananurala – Walking on Country* route along the Sydney Harbour foreshore invites people to experience Gadigal Country through all of their senses. *Yananurala* extends the Eora Journey's recognition of Aboriginal people's history and culture from Pirrama (Pyrmont) to Wallamool (Woolloomooloo Bay).

As part of the Eora Journey, we commissioned 4 First Nations artists to create major public artworks. *bara* by Aboriginal artist Judy Watson was unveiled in 2022 in the Royal Botanic Garden. It features a monumental *bara*, the traditional fishing hook carved from turban shells by Gadigal fisherwomen for thousands of generations.

### Busking policy recognises Aboriginal cultural practice

It is no longer necessary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to get a busking permit to perform their cultural practices in public places in our local area. When we reviewed and updated our policy, we were guided by First Nations communities and the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People to practice their cultures unimpeded by government regulation.



# Embedding creativity in the public domain

Our communities wanted creativity to be more frequent and visible and embedded in the city's public domain and precincts.



*YININMADYEMI, Thou didst let fall*  
by Tony Albert, 2015.



## City Art

City Art, our public art program, commissions new permanent and temporary public artworks. The program also cares for and manages more than 260 permanent public artworks including fountains, memorials and items of cultural heritage.

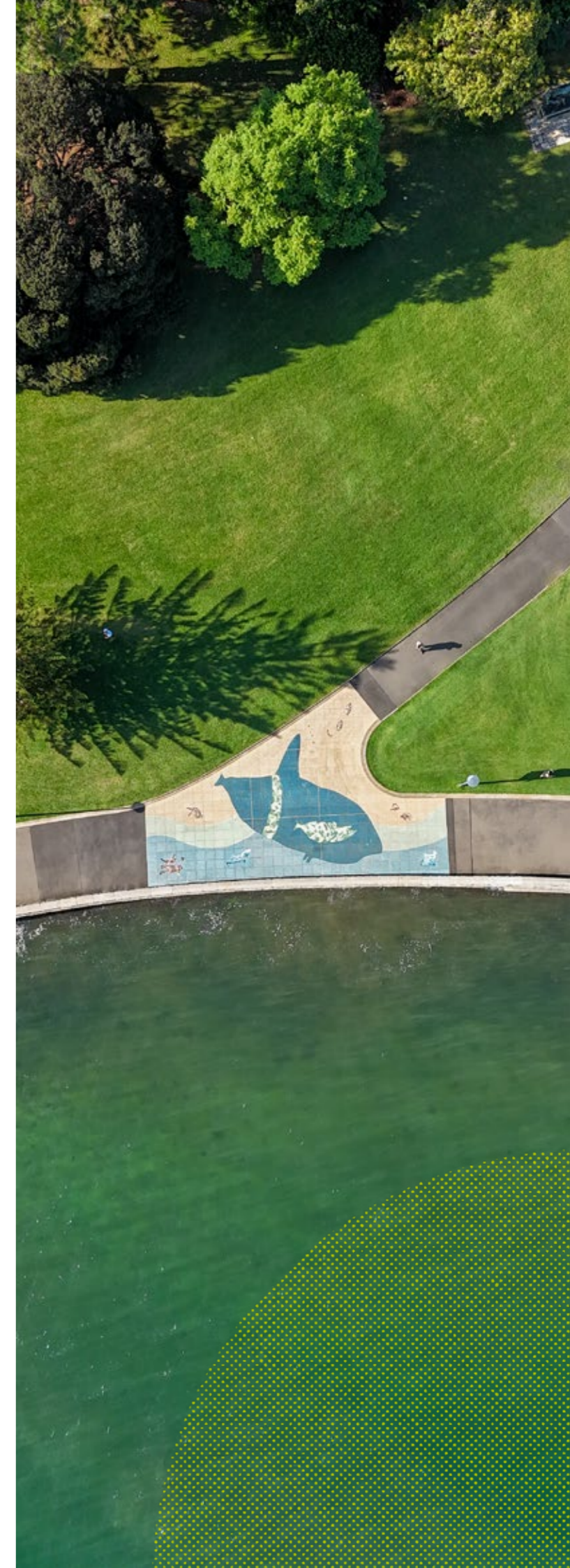
Since 2014 we've invested more than \$15 million in 23 permanent public artworks. The commissioned works include:

- *In Through the Out Door*  
by Callum Morton 2024
- *Stream*  
by Kerrie Poliness in The Drying Green, 2022
- *bangala*  
by Aunty Julie Freeman and Jonathan Jones in Gunyama Park, 2021
- *Patchwork of Light*  
by Lara Schnitger in the city centre, 202
- *The Distance of Your Heart*  
by Tracey Emin, 2018
- *YININMADYEMI, Thou didst let fall*  
by Tony Albert 2015

We spent more than \$7 million on conservation of the City Art collection including major restoration of the El Alamein Fountain in Kings Cross and 2 other fountains. We renovated the mosaic inlay artwork *Wahganmuggalee* (Farm Cove) by Brenda Croft in the Royal Botanic Garden. It honours the original Indigenous clans who lived on the site.



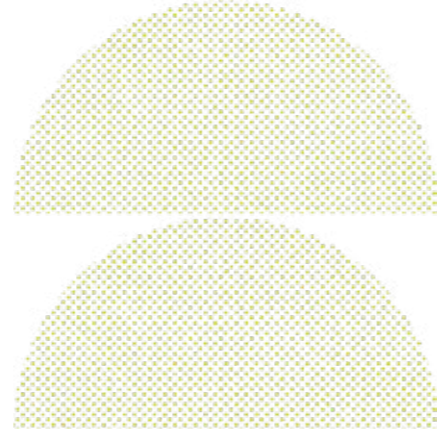
*Wahganmuggalee* (Farm Cove)  
by Brenda Croft



## City Art Laneways

Our laneway art program ran 6 times between 2007 and 2021 producing 37 temporary public art projects in inner-city laneways. We attracted hundreds of submissions from artists, architects, landscape designers, scientists, poets, programmers and musicians. We selected and paid more than 150 artists to develop their concepts with the program bringing inspiring public art to Sydney's residents and visitors.

During the Covid pandemic we invited artists to enliven our public spaces with works that harnessed empathy and contributed to people's health and wellbeing. From more than 200 submissions we commissioned 4 temporary installations. One of the installations, Barlow Street Forest, a beautiful mini-habitat of indigenous plants was so successful, we've retained it permanently.



Collaborative artist group and environmental champions The Dirt Witches at the launch of their artwork, the *Barlow Street Forest*.



*barrangal dyara* (skin and bones)  
by Jonathan Jones 2016

## Kaldor Public Art Projects

We supported Kaldor Public Art Projects to produce 3 new creative works. They included:

- ***barrangal dyara*** (Skin and bones) sculptural and performance project by Indigenous artist Jonathan Jones, 2016
- ***Marina Abramović: In Residence***, a mentorship of local artists which led to a show by the renowned performance artist at Pier 2/3, 2015
- ***Temporary Title***, participatory dance works by Xavier Le Roy at Carriageworks, 2015.







Photo credit: Jessica Hromas



We Live Here was a community-led art project in the Waterloo housing estate created in partnership with Waterloo residents as part of Art & About 2017

### Art & About

Art & About invites artists to present their work in unusual places, an invitation to surprise and delight, and reach new audiences outside of traditional galleries and venues. Originally a month-long festival it's now a year-long calendar of temporary public art and events. It now includes Australian Life and Little Sydney Lives photographic exhibitions and prizes.

“Our business has really grown. We’ve had massive exposure and we’re no longer keeping up with orders so we’ve had to stop outsourcing our fine art prints and bought our own printer (allowing us) control of our production (and) to be more creative than ever.”

Camilla de Gregorio,  
co-founder of Egpicnic, 2017



Creative hoardings artwork *Birds of Australia* by Egpicnic, 2017



Photo credit: Anna Kucera



Creative hoardings artwork *Ngaarr* by Lucy Simpson, 2021

### Creative Hoardings Program

To replace advertising on our city streets with artwork, we require property developers to display designs by living Australian artists on their construction site hoardings. Over 8 years more than 485 hoardings have featured artworks or relevant archival photography.

We achieved this by amending our hoardings and scaffoldings policy in 2016. Some developers commissioned bespoke artworks while others selected from 30 contemporary works we commissioned for use on hoardings. We pay the artists a licensing fee that lets developers use the art free of charge.

The program gives artworks wide exposure, such as Egpicnic's *Birds of Australia*, which boosted the artists' reputations and led to further commissions. It has become a model for other councils, including Hobart and Melbourne.

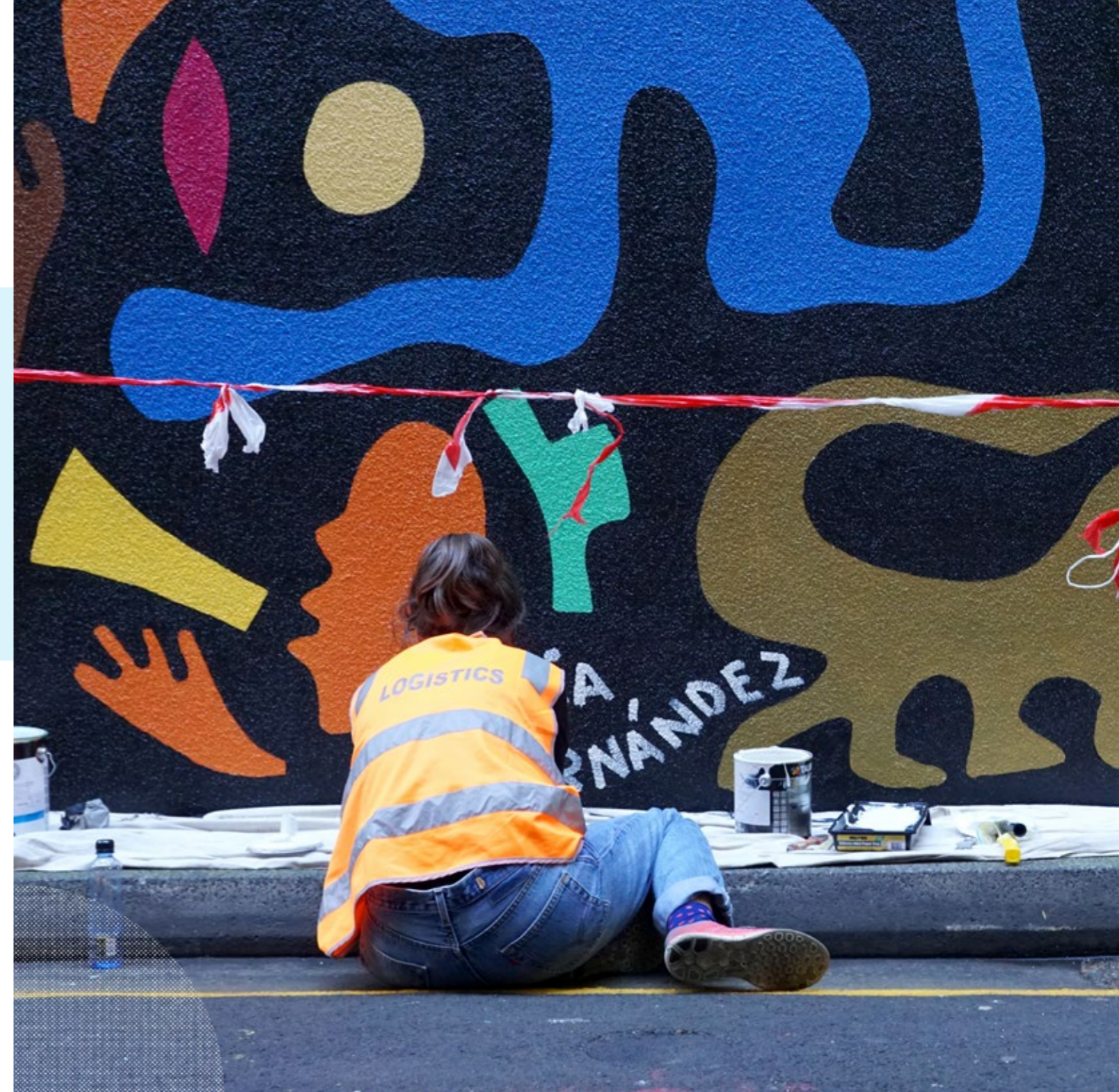


Photo credit: Jamie Williams

### Simplified process for street art

We no longer require approval for street art if it meets specific criteria. This exempt development pathway removes red tape and frees up artists and building owners to produce murals or street art more easily.



*To be free is to have no fear*  
by Nadia Fernandez, York Street, Sydney, 2016



“Our cultural life is vital to Sydney’s future. Australian cities need regulatory frameworks which balance new creative activity with the need to maintain a safe and accessible built environment.”

Clover Moore AO  
Lord Mayor of Sydney



Our City Streets program transforms Redfern Street into a relaxed and festive pedestrian-only zone

### Distinctive precincts

A key priority of our cultural policy and action plan was fostering distinctive precincts and creativity in the public domain. We also wanted to make changes to regulations and planning systems to address red tape that inhibited creative initiatives.

We revised our planning controls to foster the distinct identity of Oxford Street’s famous cultural precinct and developed a plan to revitalise Haymarket.

We made recommendations to other levels of government for planning policy and regulation that supports the cultural and creative sector to contribute to vibrant local neighbourhoods.

### Oxford Street planning controls

Building on a cluster of creative business and 2 major art schools, we want to encourage more cultural enterprise and creative jobs in the Oxford Street precinct. Our plans allow developers to access increased building height and floor space if they build in more space for creative businesses and cultural venues.

The Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ social and cultural place strategy complements these planning controls, to ensure development in Oxford Street supports continued connections and visibility of LGBTIQ+ communities.

### Transforming village high streets

In response to the Covid pandemic we transformed high streets into car-free zones letting businesses and the community gather safely. The Sydney Streets program continues to celebrate local neighbourhoods including Surry Hills, Redfern, Pyrmont, Potts Point, Darlinghurst, Glebe and Haymarket. These events offer outdoor dining, community and retail stores with roving entertainment.

### Haymarket revitalisation strategy

We allocated \$44 million over 10 years to implement our public domain plan and revitalisation strategy for the Haymarket precinct. Culture and public art are central to the plans we published in 2023 after comprehensive community consultation.



### Al Fresco Sydney

Businesses were able to offer temporary on-street dining after we reallocated selected roadways as enclosed dining areas. This boosted local economies and attracted customers back to our village high streets and central Sydney after the Covid pandemic.



Outdoor dining at Hotel Harry, Surry Hills. Concrete barrier artwork, *Time Forms* by Lisa Sammut

# New avenues for creative participation

**Our communities wanted** to be able to participate in creative activities, have opportunities for life-long learning and knowledge sharing, and to remove barriers to accessing events.



## Communities of practice

These programs provide space for a diverse group of people with shared interests to learn from each other and share knowledge and ideas while fostering social interaction through creative practice.

### Pine Street Creative Arts Centre

Our centre provide facilities and training for a wide range of arts and craft practices. The centre includes a silver jewellery studio, a ceramics studio and a printmaking studio. Workshops are offered catering to all levels of experience from beginner to more experienced artists. Our open access printmaking sessions developed into a community of practice for people over the age of 55.



Over 55 group, Printmakers at Pine Street Creative Studio



## Libraries promote culture and learning

With the opening of the new Green Square Library in 2018 and Darling Square Library in 2019, we now operate 9 libraries that loan more than 300,000 titles. Our libraries provide research resources, wifi access and cultural and learning programs, and include spaces for community meetings, music rehearsal and a makerspace. People made 6.8 million visits to our libraries over the past 10 years.

### Ideas Lab at Darling Square Library

The Darling Square Library is housed in The Exchange – a striking circular building in Darling Harbour. It contains the Ideas Lab, a 200m2 makerspace workshop, catering for new and experienced makers and creative startups to use new technology. The lab gives participants hands-on experience with 3D printers and laser cutters. It offers workshops ranging from coding to robotics.



Community workshops in the Ideas Lab at Darling Square Library



The Exchange, wrapped in almost 20km of timber, is a 6-storey mixed-use building designed by Japanese architecture firm Kengo Kuma & Associates.





### Music Room at Green Square Library

Facilities at the award-winning Green Square Library include a music room that offers a baby grand piano, guitars and recording equipment. People jam at music room sessions and learn about the recording process. The library's creative programs include regular classes in creative technology such as Adobe Creative Suite and Makerspace collection.

### Late Night Library

We paid artists to produce and present bold cultural experiences in our libraries. Our Late Night Library program showcased up-and-coming storytellers, comedians, musicians, writers and performers. For some, the experience sparked international careers. The events were free of charge to the public.



Green Square Library's music room drop-in sessions



"Underground", an after hours program at Green Square Library in 2019 offered live music, digital art installations and interactive activities, organised by high-school and tertiary-aged curators

### Youth Curators program

Our Youth Curators program enabled young people to develop and deliver cultural programs and events for their peers in our library network. Mentors helped youngsters gain skills in event management, curation and creative development. Several participants have since become program and content producers.

### Digital skills outreach

We run regular workshops in our libraries to build the digital skills and online safety of older Australians. A core library initiative is finding ways to bridge the digital divide, particularly for at-risk community members.



Michael Hing speaks to Jenny Phang and Benjamin Law 'Late Night Library presents Artists and their mums' Carnival of the Bold, 2018, Customs House Library. Photo by Andrew Vien-Debetaz

## Direct sector support grants program

Through our grants and funding program we provide direct support to artists, organisations, festivals and cultural institutions. Over the past 10 years our grants programs included:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collaboration fund
- Covid-19 emergency response funding
- cultural and creative grants
- events and festivals grants
- ideas and innovation grants (formerly knowledge exchange grants)
- quick response grants (formerly matching grants)
- live music and performance grants
- nighttime diversification grants.

Grants enable us to partner with community groups, artists and businesses to expand cultural opportunities and experiences.

# Improving access and creating markets for the arts

**Our communities wanted** fewer barriers to participating in Sydney's cultural and creative life.



## Art Money

Art Money provides interest free loans to encourage people to buy works from Australian artists at participating local galleries.

We provided seed funding to launch the project in 2014. Within one year it was offered in 35 galleries in Sydney and 140 galleries nationally, generating more than \$1.7 million in artwork sales. By 2023 it had 1,750 gallery partners in 50 countries.

Art Money is now a global fin-tech with more than 18,900 artworks purchased. It has helped build new markets for artists by reducing financial barriers to buying original artworks. Galleries and artists are paid immediately supporting a more sustainable arts ecology.

“The City of Sydney had real foresight when it made the original grant and that investment has been leveraged many times over for the Sydney and Australian arts ecosystem, and now globally.”

Paul Becker,  
Art Money founder and CEO



We supported Art Money in 2014 through a one-off grant to establish an interest free scheme for original art purchases through galleries in and around the City of Sydney local area

Photo credit: Katherine Griffiths



Photo credit: Prudence Upton



Playwave performance, Lord of the Flies, Sydney Theatre Company, 2019

## Playwave

Established with seed-funding from the City of Sydney, this online membership platform provides cheap or free access to unsold theatre and events tickets to 15 to 24-year-olds. Within 18 months, Playwave signed on 51 venue partners and 790 subscribers.

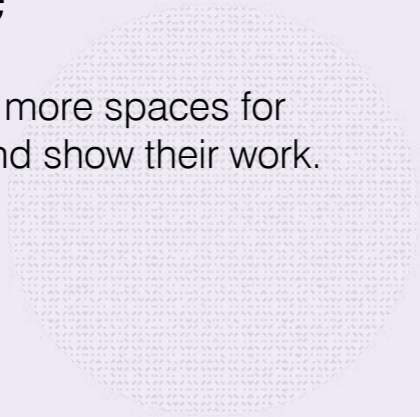
## Accessing Sydney Collectively

In 2015 we supported Accessible Arts NSW in its access and inclusion print and digital campaign to communicate, share knowledge and encourage best practice around cultural experiences and creative opportunities for people with disability.

It unveiled a new access symbol on the websites of 12 leading cultural organisations in the City of Sydney, and paved a path to more institutions taking on board these accessibility standards.

# Investing in cultural infrastructure

**Our communities wanted** more spaces for artists to create, perform and show their work.



## Theatres, concert halls and creative centres

Over the past 10 years, we improved our creative facilities in our libraries and community centres and invested in major new venues to support culture and creativity.

## Creative Spaces Timeline

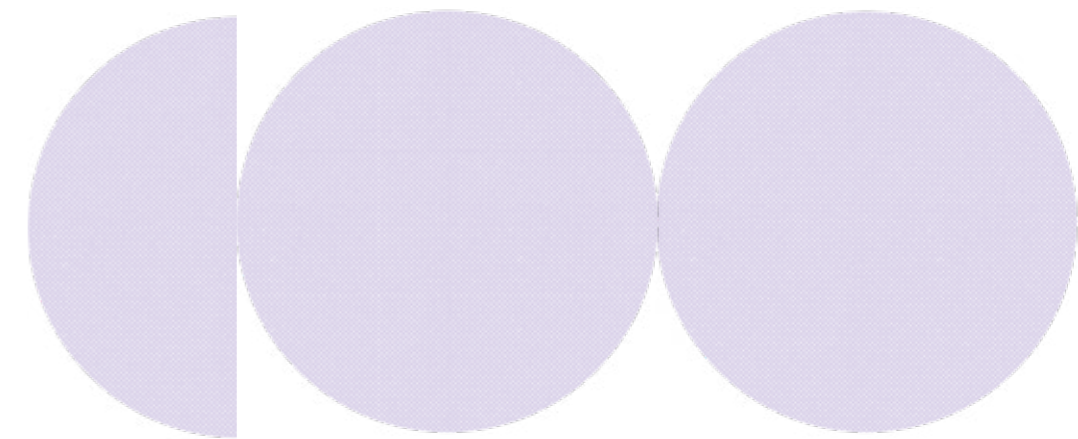


## Eternity Playhouse

The Eternity Playhouse forms part of our plan to develop the Oxford Street cultural quarter. The 132-year-old heritage-listed building was restored and transformed into the Eternity Playhouse in 2013. It is home to the Darlinghurst Theatre Company, which pays a subsidised rental rate through our accommodation grants program.



We transformed the 132-year-old heritage-listed Burton Street Tabernacle into a modern 200-seat theatre and creative arts centre, which includes a bar and cafe





### Joynton Avenue Creative Centre

In 2018 we converted a former nurses' quarters in Zetland into the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre. The centre includes workspaces for artists and small creative businesses, a jewellery workshop and exhibition space. 107 Projects, a not-for-profit cultural organisation and registered charity, is head tenant and operator of the centre.



Joynton Avenue Creative Centre



### City of Sydney Creative Studios

The City of Sydney Creative Studios are a state-of-the-art facility featuring 30 spaces across 5 storeys of the Greenland Centre, Bathurst Street. The 2,000m<sup>2</sup> facility includes rehearsal spaces, music recording studio, film and media editing suites, visual art studios and offices for arts organisations. Brand X, operates and manages this facility.



Dance workshop, Rehearsal Space, City of Sydney Creative Studios

### East Sydney Community and Arts Centre

Formerly known as Heffron Hall, the building was transformed into a sustainable, accessible community and arts centre in 2017. Brand X, a not-for-profit arts organisation, operates and manages the centre's rehearsal and performance spaces, gallery and meeting room.



East Sydney Community and Arts Centre, Darlinghurst

### Aboriginal knowledge and culture centre at 119 Redfern Street

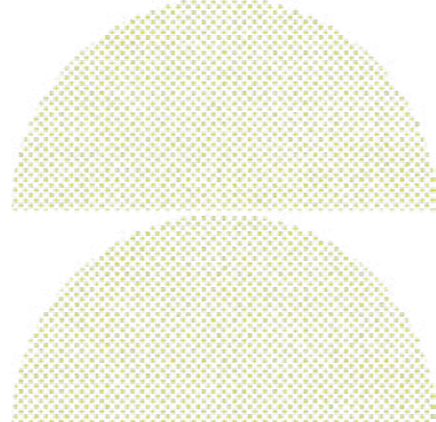
Under our Eora Journey plan we bought the historic post office building at 119 Redfern Street, in the heart of Redfern. We renovated it to house an accessible Aboriginal knowledge and culture centre. The new centre was developed in close consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and opened in May 2024.

“When I think of a knowledge centre, I think of living culture. Not a place filled with materials and objects, but with people who have real life experiences and knowledge. A place where stories, traditions and knowledge can be passed down through generations and preserved, cherished and shared.”

Tracey Duncan  
Project Manager 119 Redfern Street

# Sector sustainability: surviving and thriving

Our communities wanted the City of Sydney to support and extend business and opportunities for local artists, creative workers and cultural organisations so they not only survive but thrive in our area.



Studio artist and accommodation grantee Kil.n.it Experimental Ceramics Studio

## Accommodation grants program

Our accommodation grants program provides subsidised rents in City of Sydney-owned premises for cultural and creative operators. Since 2014 more than 30 organisations have taken up our subsidised 5-year leases, benefiting more than 50,000 people who have accessed these spaces.

## Creative live/work spaces program

Through our creative live/work spaces program we subsidise studios and living spaces for artists in the inner city. It allows them to live and work in one of 7 properties we own in Darlinghurst and Waterloo at below market rental prices.

## Oxford and Foley Street creative spaces program

Creative businesses and small to medium cultural organisations leased 25 underused commercial shopfronts and offices we own in Darlinghurst. The pilot program progressed to 4-year leases, with more than 42 entities participating. Hundreds of artists and creative workers benefitted with access to spaces to work, collaborate, exhibit, trade and reach new audiences.

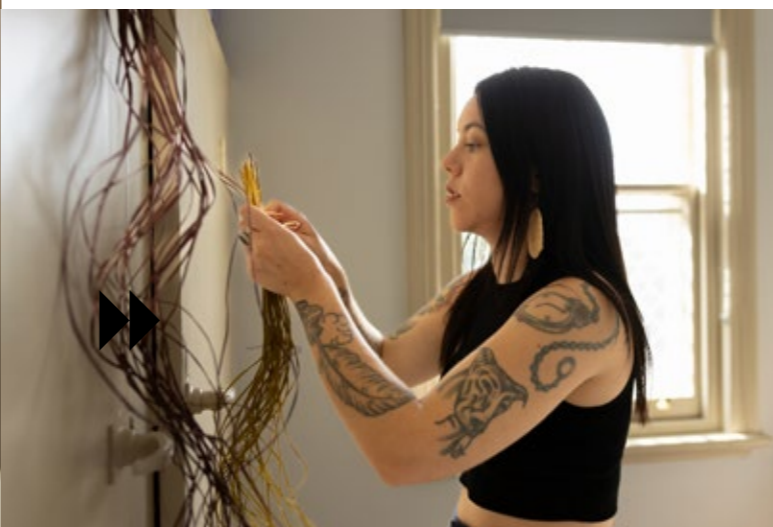


Idil Abdullahi, *Erased*, (2012)  
on exhibition at First Draft gallery,  
Woolloomooloo

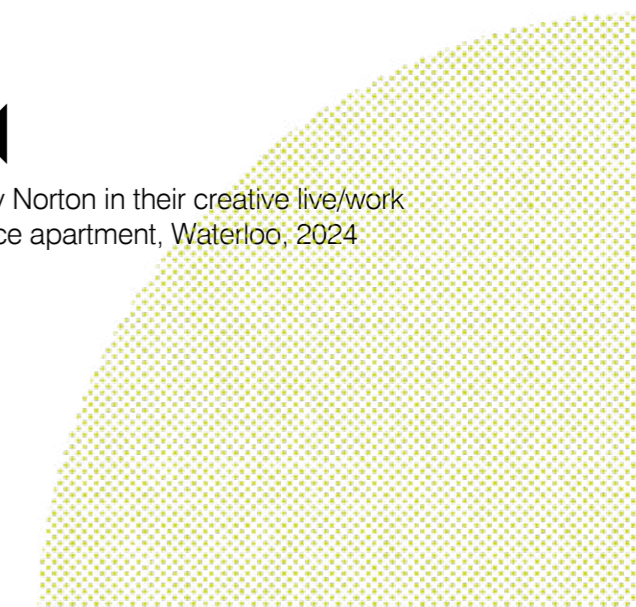


“The reduced rent and extra space meant I was not only able to save money to afford the costs associated with a record, but also had the space to work when I would otherwise have had to hire a workspace. I am on the verge of independently releasing my debut album and I absolutely believe I would not be at this stage without the artist residency program.”

Creative live/work space tenant, 2019



Lucy Norton in their creative live/work space apartment, Waterloo, 2024





# Bringing the world to Sydney

**Our communities wanted** a globally connected city that contributes to international cultural practice. They wanted us to bring Sydney to the world and the world to Sydney.

## Major events and festivals

We make a significant annual investment in events and festivals, including New Year's Eve, Lunar New Year, Sydney Christmas, and the ongoing Art & About program.



City of Sydney celebrate the Lunar New Year and welcome in 2018 Year of the Dog.

Photo credit: Katherine Griffiths



## Calling Country at Sydney New Year's Eve

Started in 2018 as part of the Sydney New Year's Eve event, Calling Country provides a high-impact representation of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It allows Indigenous artists and creative producers to showcase local storytelling to a global audience.



The 2022 New Year's Eve 9pm Calling Country fireworks and pylon projections were inspired by colours of the land, sea and sky. First Nations artists Dennis Golding and Carmen Glynn-Braun curated the display, in collaboration with Gadigal artist Nadeena Dixon

Photo credit: Damien Shaw

## Sydney Lunar Festival artist commissions

We commission artists of Asian-Australian heritage to design lunar zodiac lantern sculptures and banners for the annual Sydney Lunar Festival. The 3-week festival now acknowledges the many cultures that celebrate the Lunar New Year, including Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese communities.



The Rabbit Lantern by Nancy Lim-Liang was a large scale illuminated artwork commissioned for the 2020 Sydney Lunar Festival

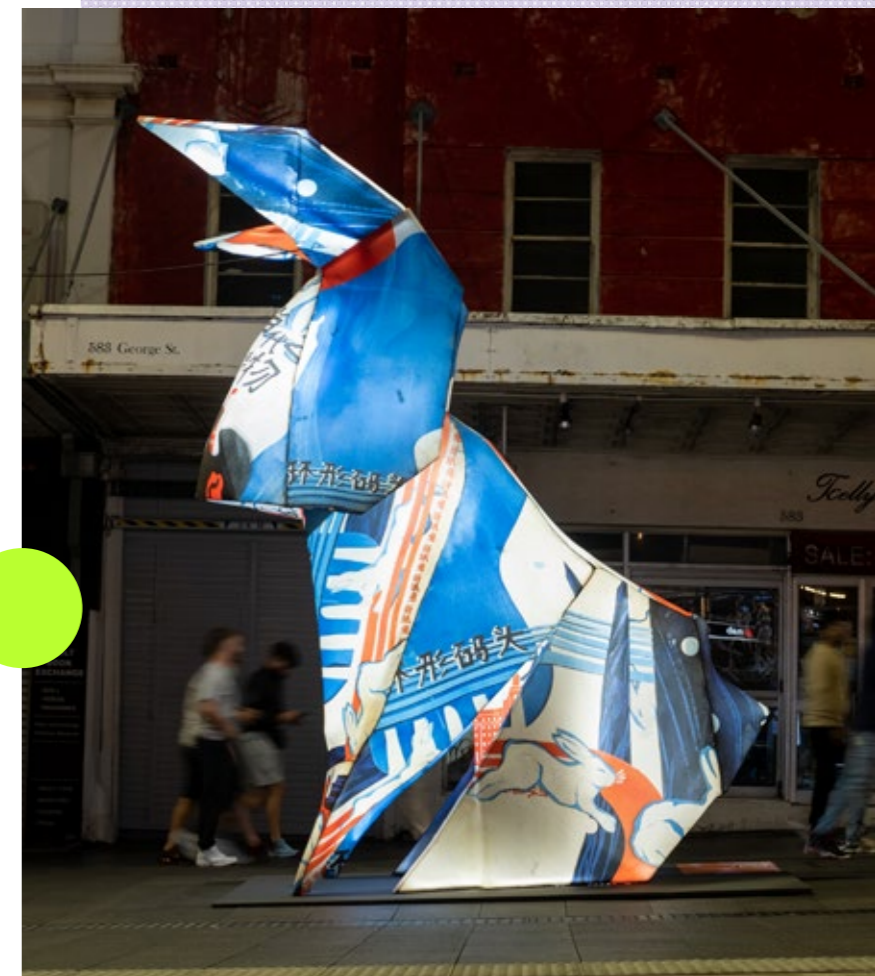


Photo credit: Chris Southwood



Photo credit: Joseph Mayers



Yabun Festival produced by Gadigal Information Services in Victoria Park is supported by the City of Sydney through venue support and direct investment



Photo credit: Chris Southwood



Biennale of Sydney 2024 Ten Thousand Suns, White Bay Power Station



Sydney Film Festival, Opening Gala, State Theatre June 2016,

## Funding for cultural festivals and events

We invest annually to support the development and production of world-class cultural festivals including:

- Antenna Film Festival
- Biennale of Sydney
- Head on Photo Festival
- Liveworks Festival, Performance Space
- Sydney Craft Week Festival
- Sydney Film Festival
- Sydney Fringe Festival
- Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras
- Sydney Festival
- Sydney Writers' Festival
- Yabun Festival.



Justin Shoulder 'AEON†: EP I' presented at Carriageworks as part of Liveworks Festival, Performance Space, 2020 and later commissioned as part of 'Nirin' 22nd Biennale of Sydney, 2020



## Advocating for arts and culture

We advocate for the value of a strong cultural life and for the arts and cultural sectors with the public and private sectors. We achieve this through research, industry networks and policy submissions.



Photo credit: Katherine Griffiths

▼ *Enchanted Sydney* by artist Spinifex Group, one of many works on display during the Sydney Vivid Festival, 2015

### Planning for culture in the night-time economy

Following the impacts from the NSW Government's lock-out laws, we advocated for a night-time economy policy that makes culture central to Sydney's nightlife. We proposed minimising regulations to allow later trade for all business types after dark. At the same time we wanted fairer management of entertainment sound to balance vibrancy with residential amenity. In 2021 some of our proposals were approved by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

### Industry support – research and resources

We supported research in areas ranging from international best practice approaches to cultural policy to the impact of building, planning, liquor and other regulatory systems on cultural activity. We also supported research projects developed by artists, community groups and small creative businesses. The research looked at aspects such as barriers to cultural participation.

Photo credit: Wendell Teodoro

### Global and local engagement

The City of Sydney contributes to local, national and international working groups and committees to support and advocate for the value of culture in our cities. We are members of the World Cities Culture Forum and the international Music Cities Network.

### CityTalks

Our CityTalks program aims to inspire, inform and engage our communities in an international dialogue to realise the city's environmental, social, cultural and economic ambitions. Each event brings together thought leaders who unpack significant issues at a global, national and city level, and spark new partnerships and collaboration opportunities.



*The Vigil at Sydney Festival, Barangaroo 2024*



