

Attachment C1


Draft Cultural Strategy 2025-2035

Cultural Strategy 2025– 2035

Retain. Rebuild. Reimagine.

CITY OF SYDNEY 





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.

SYDNEY'S CULTURAL LIFE IS...

Shiny
Fragmented **Hidden**
Hot **Sick of Waiting** Diverse
Amazing In Pubs **Hard Fought**
Quiet Super Queer **Over-Priced** Bold
Multicultural **Talking to Itself** Over Too Early
Obsessed with Big **Underground** An Apologist
Multicultural Dominated by Big Institutions **Healing**
Monocultural **A Mixed Bag** Afraid of Taking Risks
Brash Beautiful Both World Scale and Fine Grain
Fun Hard to Find **Exhausted** Corporate **Glitzy**
Clustered in Certain Areas **Commodification** Kinship
Overwhelming Aspirational Founded in Activism
Competing to be Heard **Resilient** Losing Character
Welcoming of Everyone Under-valued **Sparse**
Exclusive Eruptive **Teetering Always On**
Always a Discovery A Work in Progress
Under-Nurtured **Over-Regulated**
The Best Thing We've Got
Evolving

What our creative sector said
about Sydney's cultural life

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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 that 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. Now, as cost-of-living pressures squeeze our local creative communities like never before, it is time we refresh our strategy,

increase our investment and sharpen our focus to get the most impact.

We will respond to the evolving needs of our creative industries so that we may retain the workers and the spaces that make Sydney's culture. We will form strategic partnerships to ensure our vital cultural infrastructure is replenished, with the right kinds of spaces for the sector to grow again. And guided by the vision of our community, we will reimagine a thriving, sustainable and inclusive future for our city's cultural life.



Clover Moore AO
Lord Mayor of Sydney





Introduction

Culture underpins all that is meaningful in our lives and our communities, it is what makes a city more than the sum of its parts. It gives Sydney its character and a sense of belonging for all of us who love this place. Without our culture, there is nothing to define us and bind us.



The people who work in the arts, culture and creative industries are central to this – those who make-manifest the intangible and give diverse, distinct voice to our stories, ideas and imaginings. These creative workers are embedded throughout so much of our economy and their work supports technology and innovation, tourism, retail and hospitality sectors, and a vibrant 24-hour global city. They also have a significant role to play in education, climate adaptation, social cohesion, health and wellbeing.

When we developed *Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision* we asked our community to tell us what they most value in our city. They were emphatic about the importance of maintaining a thriving cultural life in Sydney. We know, to achieve this, we need the people who make culture and the places where they work.

The City of Sydney makes a significant, ongoing contribution. We safeguard vital local venues for making and presenting culture. In 2024, our cultural property portfolio provides 8,300m² to 41 cultural tenants, facilitating thousands of opportunities for creative participation each year. We have built new infrastructure for rehearsals, music production, visual arts, and screen-based media. We produce free and accessible events and creative programs, and we dedicate more than \$5 million in grant funding to cultural purposes every year.

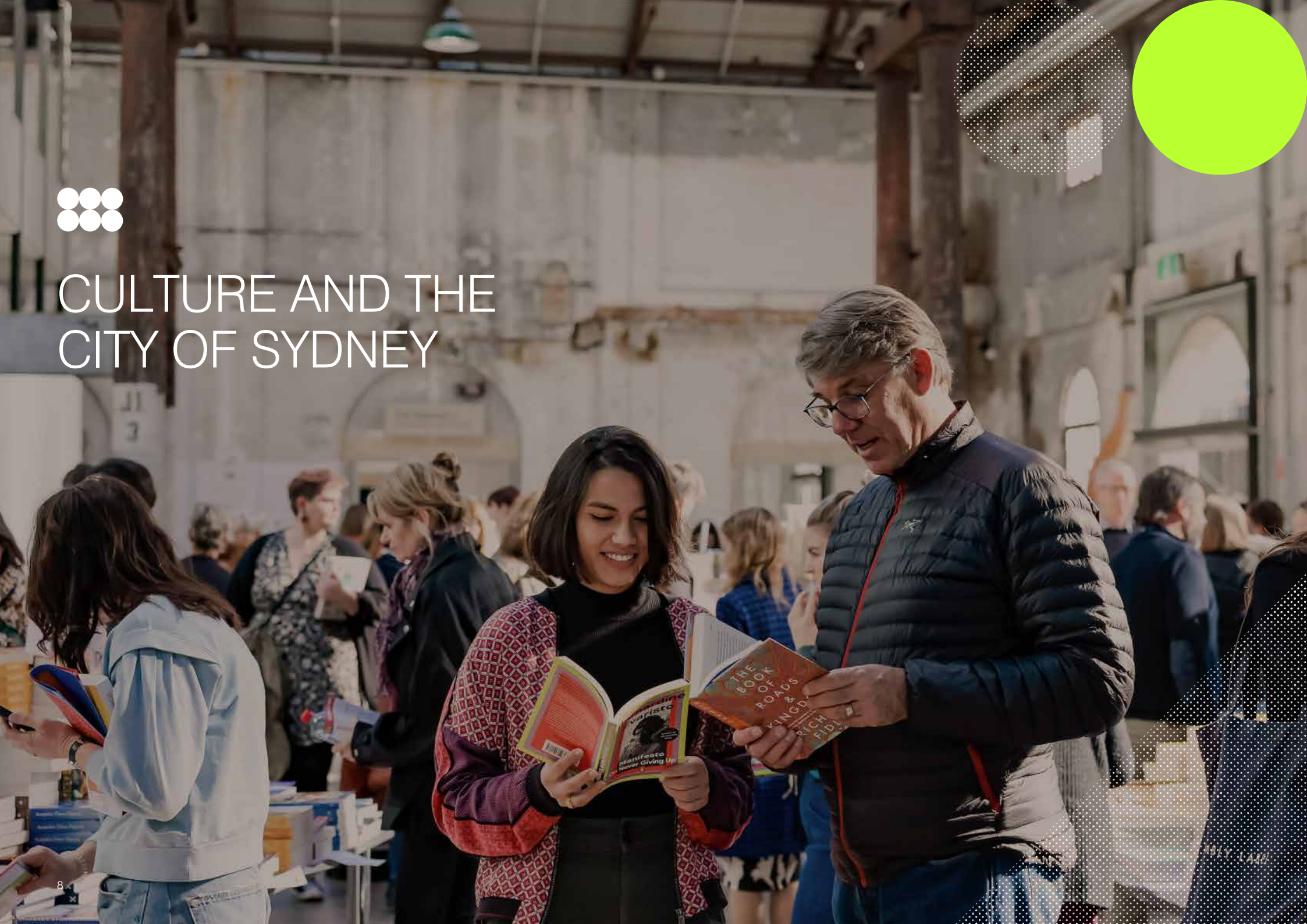
Despite our sustained investment, the global economic circumstances, long-tail impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, inflationary pressures and the affordability crisis are pushing Sydney's creative spaces and workers to the brink. We have had to remain responsive to these disruptions and refocus our support to meet emerging needs. That is why we've refreshed our 10 year cultural strategy to focus on the immediate challenge of retaining our cultural infrastructure and workforce, as well as set an aspirational path towards our community's vision for a thriving cultural life and creative city.

This strategy sets our intentions and a framework for how we will pursue our 8 strategic ambitions for culture. It is particularly focused on our strengths as a local government and the areas in which we have most influence. It is an invitation to neighbouring councils, other levels of government and the private sector to work with us in partnerships for greater impact. We know that Sydney's creative sector is borderless and that people who live in other government areas deliver great value to our cultural life. That is why, where appropriate, we will provide opportunities to artists and organisations from Greater Sydney and initiate actions that will benefit the whole metropolitan region.

We know there are no simple solutions to the challenges facing Sydney and other global cities like ours, but we will manage these challenges better together. This strategy outlines an approach to this evolving work – to retain what we have, rebuild what we have lost, and reimagine our cultural life as sustainable, equitable, inspiring and thriving.



CULTURE AND THE CITY OF SYDNEY





At the City of Sydney, when we say “culture” we mean:

- the arts, cultural and creative industries
- the heritage, knowledge and cultural practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- the expressions of identity, and shared experience and aspirations of our diverse and multicultural communities.

This strategy includes a vision and ambitions for all these aspects of our cultural life.





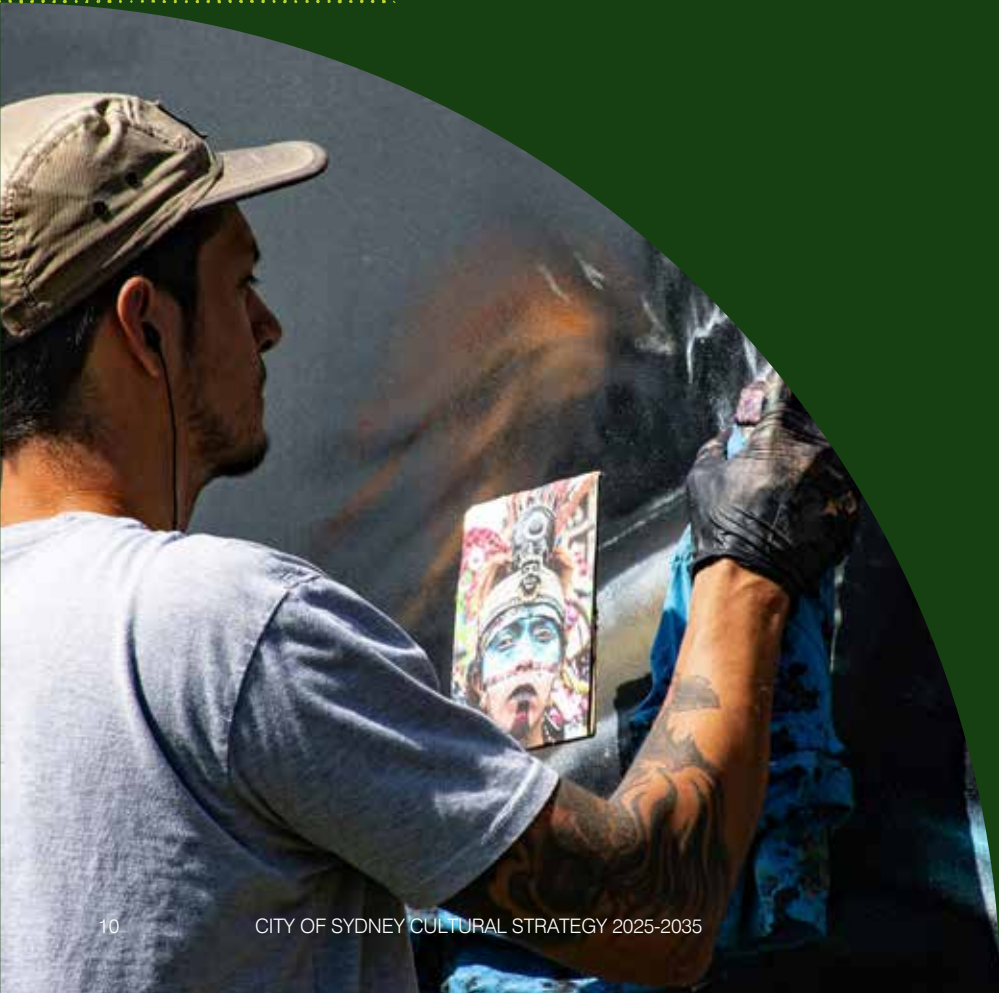
A thriving cultural life

We are proud of our city.

Everyone can participate in, contribute to and benefit from the cultural life of our city.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultural practices are visible and respected.
- We value our cultural life and champion our creative industries.
- An increasing number of creative workers live or work in our city.
- Sydney's cultural life reflects the diversity of our communities.
- There is an increasing supply of accessible creative spaces.
- Creativity and culture is embedded in the fabric of our city.
- Creativity and great experiences fuel the vitality of our city.
- There is equitable access to education and learning opportunities, everyone can participate in a creative practice.

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050: Continuing the Vision is our community strategic plan. It is the result of extensive consultation with people who live, work and visit in our city. This is their vision for 'a thriving cultural life' that is central to the future of our city.





Our support for culture

We support a thriving cultural life in our city in 4 strategic areas – these are our cultural pillars.



Right to culture

We respect and protect First Nations people's connections to Country and Culture.

We celebrate the many cultures of our diverse, multicultural and inclusive city

We acknowledge culture as vital to liveability and wellbeing.



Creative workforce

We champion our creative workforce and build opportunities for creative employment, talent retention, cultural exports and a sustainable local sector.



Cultural infrastructure

We provide, protect, advocate and plan for the infrastructure needed to support our creative industries and a thriving cultural life.



Creative participation

We ensure there are pathways for everyone to engage in a creative practice and participate in the cultural life of Sydney.



How we support culture

Our support for a thriving cultural life is embedded across every department and service we provide.

While we maintain cultural programs, events and creative spaces, we also consider how all our activities can play a role in supporting the cultural life of the city. This includes our planning and regulatory functions, our design and management of public spaces, our property and archive assets, and our customer service and communications channels.

We support culture through:

Production

We produce programs and events that provide audiences with equitable access to culture.

Employment

We employ creative production staff, performers, curators and arts educators, and we commission new work and acquire art.

Investment

We provide cash and in-kind grants and a program of direct sector support.

Space

We supply a diverse portfolio of creative spaces and facilities, and influence future supply with our planning policy. We design public spaces to enable and enrich our cultural life.

Inspiration

We record and share the stories of our city, we provide access to knowledge and skills, and make connections – between audiences and cultural offerings, collaborators and new partners, and artists with ideas.

Leadership

We advocate for a strong and secure cultural sector. We carry out research to guide and empower the sector. We demonstrate best practice in engaging creative workers, respecting intellectual property and producing inclusive and accessible events.

Through our relationships with local councils and state and federal government agencies we advocate on behalf of the cultural sector and our communities.

