

2025–2035

OUR CREATIVE FUTURE

A 10 year vision for arts,
culture and creativity in Ipswich.



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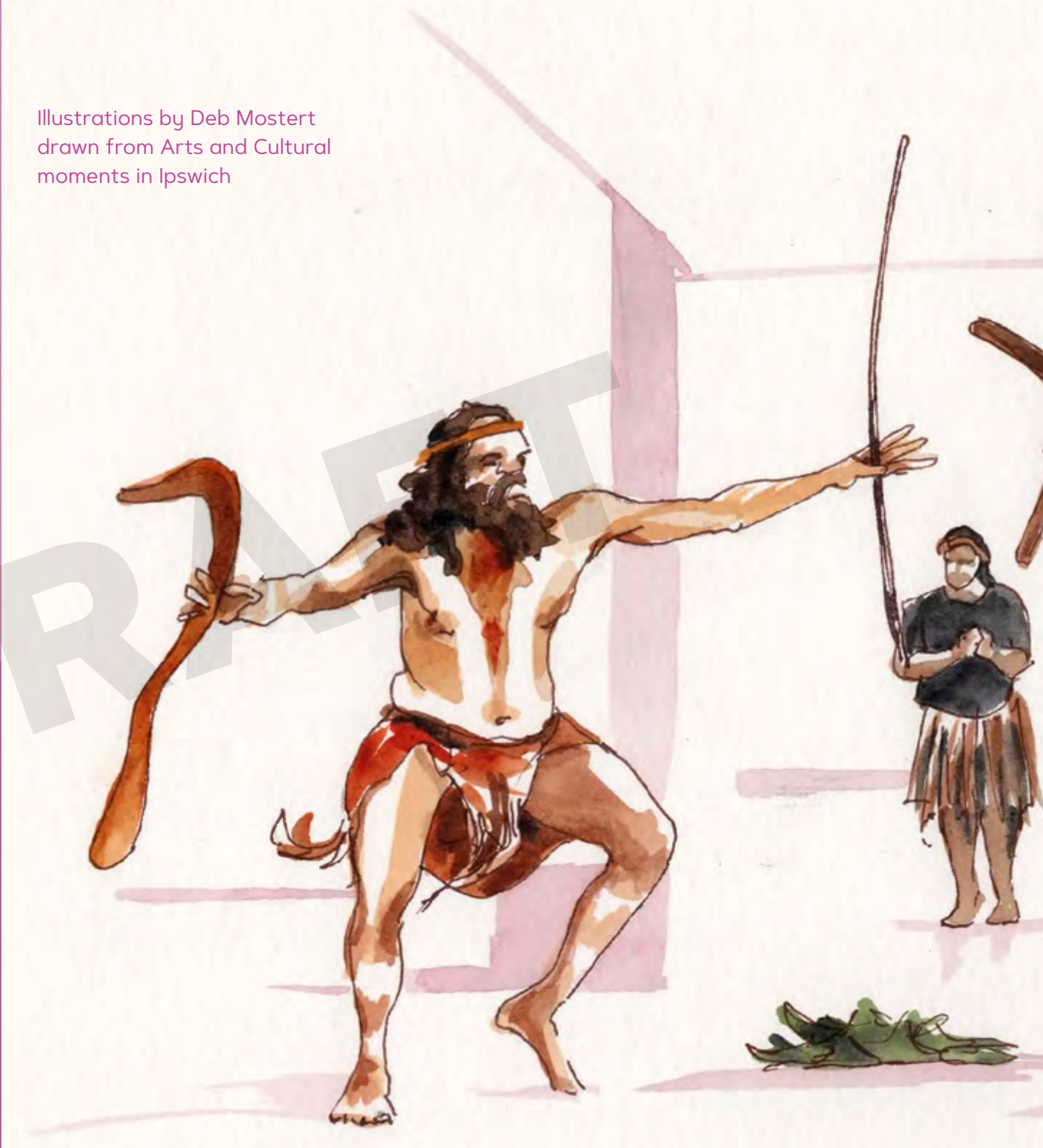
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Ipswich City Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Ipswich region, the Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul People as custodians of the land and waters we share. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, as keepers of the traditions, customs, cultures and stories of proud people.

Illustrations by Deb Mostert
drawn from Arts and Cultural
moments in Ipswich





FOREWORD

DRAFT

ABOUT IPSWICH

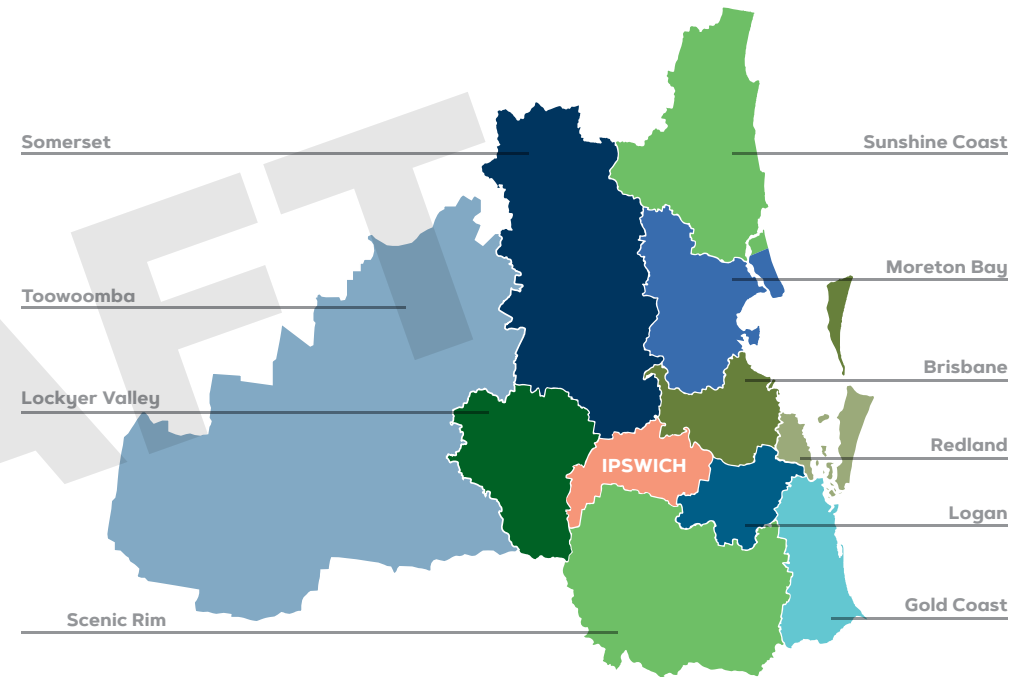
Ipswich is experiencing an artistic and cultural transformation, positioning itself as a city where creativity is lived, not just observed. As the fastest-growing city in Queensland, its population is expected to double in the next 16 years, bringing a crucial opportunity to embed arts, culture and creativity into the city's identity, economy and future.

Ipswich sits on the doorstep of Brisbane yet remains outside the well-trodden tourist path to the Gold Coast, requiring a bold and distinctive creative identity that is grounded in its own history, talent and community spirit. Cultural activation is designed and delivered by professional arts workers, artists and community champions. While local artists and cultural leaders know the strength of Ipswich's creative scene, it remains largely unknown outside the region. This is a city that must now claim its place – not as a secondary player, but as a leader in grassroots-led creativity, cultural innovation, and artist-driven transformation.

Ipswich has the opportunity to leverage major global events on the horizon, including the SEQ City Deal, the 2028–2032 Cultural Olympiad and the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games, for long-term community benefit.

Our *Creative Future* is not about starting from scratch – it's about building on the incredible work already happening and making sure the world sees what Ipswich's artists, creatives and cultural leaders have always known: this city is something special.

Map 1: SEQ Region



THE POWER OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts and culture help us understand who we are individually and collectively. They reflect our experiences and help us make sense of the world. Arts and culture can be a catalyst for deeper thinking, broadening conversations and challenging the status quo.

As Ipswich undergoes significant growth, we have an opportunity to shape the kind of city we become. Growth brings new residents, new homes and new infrastructure, which brings with it the opportunity for connection, identity and belonging. For Ipswich it is not just a question of how much we grow, but how well.

Arts and culture are not side projects. They reflect what it is to be human, and are the foundation for a thriving, liveable and connected city – challenging perceptions, pushing boundaries and powering groundbreaking ideas. They help ensure our growth is not only sustainable, but meaningful and inclusive.

Underpins our humanness

The arts build understanding of self and others, and is a catalyst for deeper thinking and reflection.

Builds social cohesion

Creative experiences bring strangers together. As our city grows, the arts help people find belonging, form, connections, and feel part of something bigger.

Strengthens our reputation

A creative city stands out. Arts and culture give Ipswich a strong personality that draws people in – residents, businesses, visitors and investors.

Brings our city to life

Culture transforms space. It animates streets, invites people into public places and ensures new growth is matched by local vibrancy and activity.

Deepens our sense of place

Arts and culture make our identity visible. They connect people to local stories, natural landscapes, and what makes Ipswich different from anywhere else.

Supports healthier communities

From music to murals, creative expression offers joy, purpose and mental wellbeing – particularly important in a fast changing, fast paced environment.

Prepares us for the future economy

Creative skills are the foundation for innovation, adaptability and entrepreneurship. Investing in the arts means investing in future jobs and industries.

Expands what's possible

Creativity helps people imagine new futures – especially young people. It builds confidence, curiosity and a belief that we can share what comes next.



WHY A VISION MATTERS

Our Creative Future is not an action plan or strategy. It's a north star to guide future decisions, inspire our community and focus our investment.

A strong cultural vision recognises that creativity is central to identity, wellbeing, economic growth and everyday life. It provides clear direction, brings stakeholders together and confirms that arts and culture are essential to a thriving community.

A vision is aspirational by design and grounded in place and potential. For the people of Ipswich, a vision ensures creative experiences are accessible, inclusive and reflect us. It supports storytelling, diverse voices, and a shared sense of pride and belonging. It empowers people to believe in themselves and support one another by acting boldly and choosing initiative over hesitation.

For council, it lays the groundwork for smarter planning, stronger partnerships and targeted investment. It can unlock state and federal funding, guide infrastructure development, inform strategic partnerships and connect cultural goals with economic development, tourism and community development.

For artists and creatives, a vision provides legitimacy, support and a sense of future. It celebrates creativity, opens opportunities and build career pathways signaling that creative work is valued and vital to community life.

While a vision sets the direction, it is not an action plan. It doesn't list every project, timeline or budget line. Instead, it **provides the north star that guides future decisions, energy and investment**. A vision offers the why and where, the shared purpose and long-term destination so that more detailed strategies, action plans, and partnerships can be developed in response to conditions beyond council's control.

Ultimately, a vision is a roadmap. It brings people together around shared values, guides priorities, and helps shape a bold, creative future.



DEVELOPING THE VISION

Our Creative Future is grounded in community input. Council set out to hear from as many people as possible – artists, arts workers, cultural practitioners, First Nations people, young people, residents, council staff and other stakeholders.

To support broad participation, council offered a variety of ways for people to engage. This included an online survey open to all community members, targeted workshops with local creatives, a dedicated First Nations workshop, a session for young people and online sessions for those unable to attend in person. These platforms helped us gather insights, ideas and aspirations from across the region.

In shaping the vision, council also reviewed relevant reports, research and the outcomes of past community and stakeholder engagement. This helped us build on what had already been shared, rather than asking the community to repeat themselves and consequently contribute to consultation fatigue. By reflecting on the achievements of the Arts and Cultural Strategy 2018–2023 and by combining fresh input with existing knowledge, we've created a vision that is not only forward-looking, but grounded in the experience, cultural knowledge and creative ambition of the Ipswich community.

THE OPPORTUNITY IS NOW

Ipswich stands at a defining crossroads in its cultural development.

With a population growth and an increasingly diverse and youthful community, the city is uniquely positioned to embed arts and culture as a driver of connection, innovation and investment. The next strategic phase of arts and cultural development is essential to ensure Ipswich grows with creativity and delivers on the community's aspiration of a **city of opportunity for all**.

National and international evidence consistently shows that arts and culture contribute significantly to community wellbeing, economic resilience, and civic pride. Cultural participation is associated with improved mental health, greater social inclusion, and stronger educational outcomes, particularly for young people. Creative infrastructure and activity help to shape vibrant public spaces that foster cultural innovation, enhance cultural identity and embed local stories into the fabric of a place. As Ipswich expands, these benefits are not luxuries, they are strategic assets for shaping a healthy, thriving city.

The creative industries are among the fastest-growing sectors globally, offering pathways for employment that are adaptable, entrepreneurial, and deeply place-based.

Ipswich already has a vibrant ecosystem of local creatives, many of whom are active despite limited formal pathways. Strategic focus on arts and culture over the next phases of civic development can help convert this potential into sustainable careers, stronger community businesses, and cultural tourism outcomes. The city's existing momentum demonstrates both demand and capacity.

Ipswich has a unique opportunity in this moment with a clear approach and investment in infrastructure, talent and sector development, Ipswich will support, develop and retain emerging creatives. With continued leadership and support, existing community energy will build as the creative community feels valued and heard. Ipswich's ability to leverage major events on the horizon, such as the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics, where cities across the region are already positioning themselves for national and international attention.

Investment in this next phase will influence not just cultural life, but the city's social fabric, reputation, and economic resilience for decades to come.

OUR 10 YEAR VISION

Ipswich will be a
nationally recognised
creative city, shaped
by its people, powered
by its spirit and
grounded in
its history.

By 2035, creativity will be central to how Ipswich grows. It will be part of everyday life, embedded in our streets, reflected in our stories and echoed in how we solve problems. It will be expressed through the ways we gather, create and connect. Arts and culture will reflect who we are: diverse, proud and unafraid to back ourselves. As one of Australia's fastest-growing cities, Ipswich will use creativity to drive opportunity, grow our economy and bring people together. We will attract visitors who come to explore our galleries, discover our quirky venues, attend events and experience the unique cultural energy of our city. Our artists will continue to grow an international reputation for being extraordinary.

Creativity will help us build a city of imagination, inclusion and shared pride – a city of opportunity for all.

WE VALUE

Our values shape the way we approach everything, from grassroots community events to high-profile international productions, and from emerging voices to established artists. These values anchor our decisions and actions, ensuring that creativity is nurtured, respected and celebrated at every level.

Arts experiences that inspire

Great art moves us, challenges us, and opens our hearts and minds to new ways of seeing. We value creative experiences that spark curiosity, courage, imagination and empathy – enriching our understanding of ourselves, each other, and the world around us.

The Ipswich spirit and personality

We embrace what makes our Ipswich unique – our people, our heritage, our history and our environment. Arts and culture help us express and share the character of our communities. We celebrate creativity that feels unmistakably Ipswich and applaud people giving it a go. True to the Ipswich spirit, we back ourselves, lift one another up, and approach every challenge with quiet determination and pride.

Creativity that brings us together

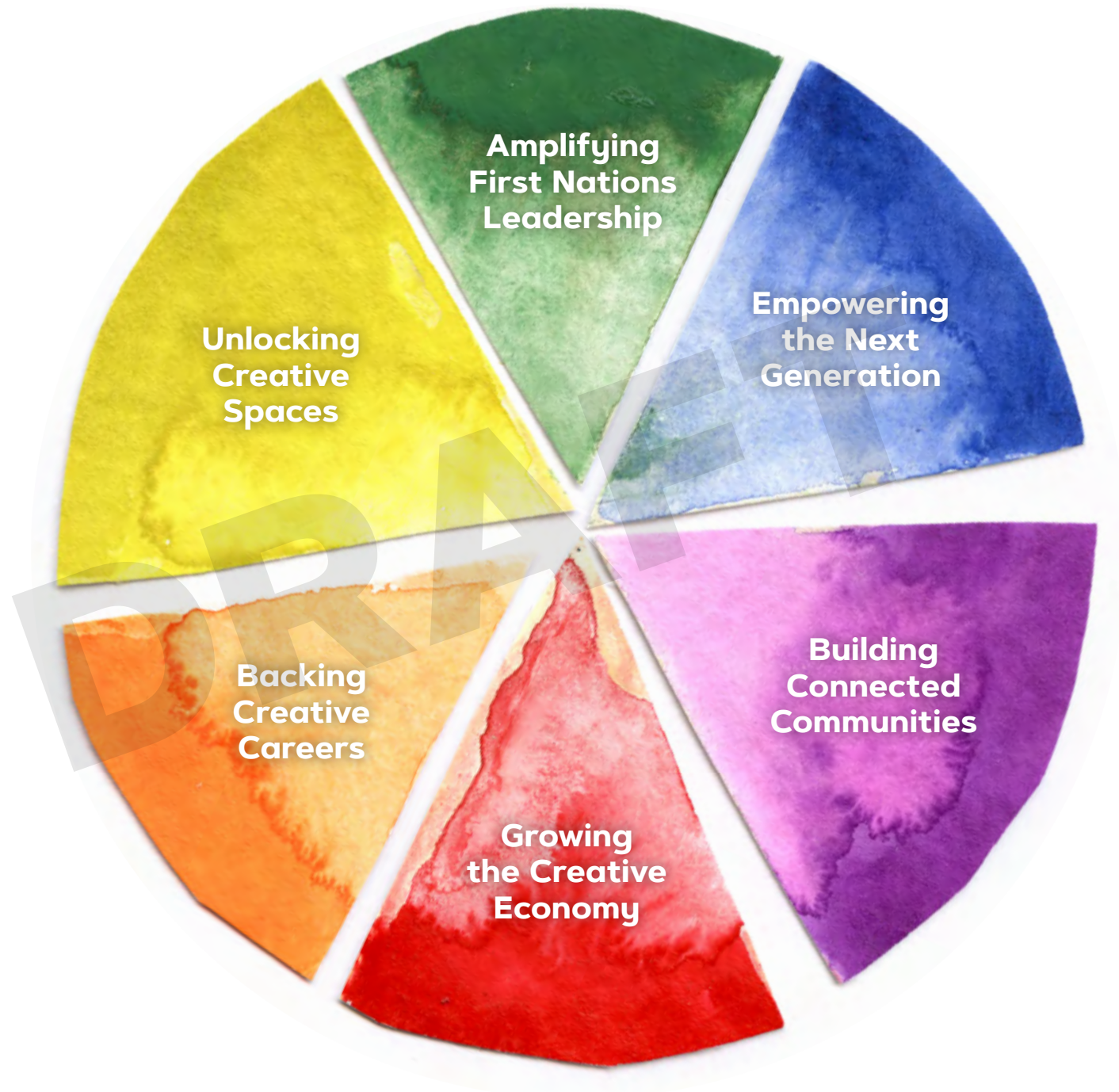
We value arts and culture as a powerful force for inclusion and belonging. Everyone – regardless of culture, background, ability, identity, or experiences – should see themselves reflected, welcomed, and celebrated in the creative life of Ipswich.





CREATIVE PRIORITIES

These six creative priorities reflect what matters most to our community and set the direction for how we'll grow creativity, connection and opportunity. They are the building blocks for developing a city where creativity is part of everyday life – for everyone, in every place.



Amplifying First Nations Leadership

First Nations peoples have always been culture-makers and storytellers. We will centre First Nations leadership, visibility and truth-telling in shaping our region's creative future.

Over the next 10 years, together we will achieve:

- culturally led inclusion of First Nations people in the development of policy, programs and initiatives
- greater recognition, understanding and respect for First Nations history, heritage and culture through visible and ongoing cultural expression
- greater cultural awareness and cultural safety that supports participation of First Nations families and community
- cultural knowledge shared across generations to support young First Nations people to connect with culture and identity
- visibility of First Nations artists in galleries, public spaces, performances and in unconventional places.

Empowering the Next Generation

Children and young people are creators, audiences and changemakers. We will build on Ipswich's reputation for supporting the creative expression and development of young people, to create opportunities that ignite imagination, develop their skills and connections and nurture a new generation of creative thinkers and leaders.

Over the next 10 years, together we will achieve:

- safe, supportive spaces for children and young people to experiment and take creative risks, particularly beyond the school gate
- more confident young people who have the skills to express themselves, explore their identity, new ideas, problem-solve and collaborate
- intergenerational connections as young people share their creative work with families and the broader community
- young people with a passion for the arts seeing possible career pathways into the creative industries
- inclusion of children and young people's voices in shaping the community.



Building Connected Communities

Creativity fosters connection, inclusion and community pride. We will champion creative participation across neighbourhoods and generations to strengthen social bonds and support wellbeing.

Over the next 10 years, together we will achieve:

- greater social connections and improved wellbeing through participation in creative workshops, events and experiences across Ipswich neighbourhoods
- a stronger sense of belonging built through local storytelling, creative expression and community arts
- a more compassionate and connected community built through shared experiences, a feeling of safety and opportunities for creative collaborations
- diverse communities will see themselves and their experiences reflected in creative programming.

Growing the Creative Economy

Ipswich's creative economy is powered by innovation, cultural activity and local talent. We will champion makers, businesses and events that attract visitors, support jobs and build pride in our city.

Over the next 10 years, together we will achieve:

- more local jobs and diverse Ipswich-based creative businesses
- vibrant outdoor spaces and events that attract visitors and create shared community pride
- a reduction in complex administrative barriers that hinder creative businesses and events
- high-profile exhibitions, performances and other cultural opportunities that capture and grow local audiences for the arts
- more visitors who stay longer thanks to memorable cultural experiences
- thriving local businesses that experience the flow-on benefits – spending on dining, retail, accommodation and tourism experiences.



Backing Creative Careers

Artists and creative industry workers bring our city to life. We will support career pathways through collaboration, visibility and access to programs and creative spaces.

Over the next 10 years, together we will achieve:

- a vibrant mix of diverse creative expression in traditional and unexpected places across the city
- growing recognition and profile of Ipswich's artists and creatives – locally, nationally and internationally
- a connected creative network where artists, businesses and organisations collaborate and support each other
- a more visible creative culture where artists, arts workers and cultural practitioners choose Ipswich as their home
- young people seeing a future in the arts and creative industries in Ipswich.

Unlocking Creative Spaces

Creative practice needs spaces that are physical, digital or social. We will activate, adapt, promote and grow the environments that support creativity, from community hubs and cultural venues to online platforms, making it easier for people to create, connect and know about opportunities across the city.

Over the next 10 years, together we will achieve:

- creative activation of existing, underused and interesting spaces by facilitating smarter use of Council facilities, commercial properties, community venues and non-traditional spaces.
- cultural infrastructure that grows with the city and adapts to changing creative practices and community need
- accessible spaces for local artists and groups, reducing barriers to create, collaborate and present work
- a stronger local arts scene with infrastructure that supports innovation, experimentation and excellence
- community hubs alive with activity where neighbours come together to connect, learn and be inspired.

Taking action

Council will develop and publish a series of Action Plans that will incorporate the 6 Creative Priorities and contribute to achieving the Vision – **Ipswich as a nationally recognised creative city, shaped by its people, powered by its spirit and grounded in its history.**

Council will regularly monitor, measure and report on progress in delivering **Our Creative Future.**



RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

2041 Community Vision

*A city of
opportunity
for all*

THEME 1

Vibrant and Growing
+

THEME 2

Safe, Inclusive and Creative

5 Year Council Corporate Plan



Alignment with council strategic documents

Arts and Cultural
Vision 2025-2035



- Ipswich Heritage Plan 2025-2029
- Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027
- Community Development Strategy 2021-2026
- Indigenous Accord 2020-2025
- Strengthening Ipswich Communities Plan 2025
- Destination Management Plan 2019-2023
- Ipswich Planning Scheme
- Revitalising Ipswich Central, A prospectus to guide change





Ipswich City Council
PO Box 191, Ipswich QLD 4305, Australia

Phone (07) 3810 6666
council@ipswich.qld.gov.au
ipswich.qld.gov.au

Join us online:

 /IpswichCityCouncil

 /ipswich-city-council

 /IpswichCityCouncilTV

