

Culture the Life of Our City - Public Consultation

Wednesday, 5 March 2025
Reconciliation Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

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Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has committed to developing a Cultural Policy as a key action in the Strategic Plan 2024–2028. In October 2024, Council approved a Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – *Culture: The Life of Our City* (the Discussion Paper), for public consultation.

This report and presentation (**Attachment B**) seeks the Reconciliation Committee's feedback on the Discussion Paper as an important part of the consultation that informs the Cultural Policy's development. In particular, feedback is sought on the six draft priorities that have been identified in the Discussion Paper:

1. *People are at the Centre of our City and its Culture*
2. *Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Continuous Cultures*
3. *Celebrating Multiculturalism and Respecting Diversity and Traditions*
4. *Adelaide is Australia's Cultural and Creative Capital*
5. *The City's Culture is Connected to our Built and Natural Heritage, and*
6. *Creativity and Culture Drive our City's Future.*

In addition to general feedback on the Discussion Paper and its six draft priorities, and as outlined in paragraph 9 of this report, Administration seeks the Reconciliation Committee's feedback on the following:

- How can we champion Kaurna culture in our shared future in meaningful ways?
- What steps can we take to ensure that Kaurna and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices influence, and are represented in the city's cultural decisions?
- What collaborative and co-led initiatives and projects would increase the visibility of Kaurna culture in the public realm?

Consultation feedback from the Cultural Forum held in December 2024 and from Panpanpalya in February 2025 has highlighted to the Administration the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation to be reflected in the development of the draft Cultural Policy. For example, through community partnerships and visible markers of Kaurna history and culture throughout the city and Park Lands. Key themes reflected in the feedback from Panpanpalya are included in this report at paragraph 25.1.

This report also seeks the Reconciliation Committee's views on opportunities for how the Cultural Policy might be further strengthened in its alignment with the *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (2024-2027)*, particularly in relation to ways that the City of Adelaide may, through the development of its Cultural Policy, strengthen understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and cultural protocols and improve cultural safety for First Nations peoples working in the cultural and creative sectors in the City of Adelaide.

It is proposed that the Cultural Policy will operate over a ten-year period and will be supported by strategies and action plans developed in alignment with the City of Adelaide's Strategic Plan and Annual Business Plan and Budget process.

Feedback from the Reconciliation Committee on this report and the Discussion Paper will be considered in the development of the draft Cultural Policy, which will be presented to Council for approval in 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE

1. Receives the Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – Culture: The Life of Our City for consultation, as detailed in Attachment A to Item 5.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of the Reconciliation Committee held on 5 March 2025, and provides additional feedback complementing insights from Panpanpalya in February 2025.
 2. Authorises administration to draft feedback on the Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – Culture: The Life of Our City, incorporating input from Reconciliation Committee for circulation and review by the Committee outside of session
 3. Notes that a consultation summary and draft Cultural Policy will be presented to Council for consideration and endorsement in April 2025, with a further opportunity for community feedback prior to adoption by Council.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Community Vibrant, connected and inclusive</p> <p>Our Objective is to support our communities to thrive, create fun, lively and interesting experiences, celebrate and honour community and cultures. An indicator of success for the ‘Our Community’ outcome of “An inclusive, equitable and welcoming community where people feel a sense of belonging” is: <i>Develop a Cultural Policy by 2024 that promotes and supports the City’s unique cultural identity and opportunities</i>. The draft Cultural Policy will also support these pillars of Council’s Strategic Plan: Our Environment, Our Economy and Our Places.</p>
Policy	Council does not currently have a Cultural Policy. It is proposed that Council’s Cultural Policy will operate from 2025 to 2036 to help set strategic directions for the City of Adelaide and its subsidiaries and focus its resources.
Consultation	Council endorsed the Cultural Policy Discussion Paper for public consultation in October 2024. Key forums, including the Live Music Forum (November 2024) and Culture: The Life of Our City Forum (December 2024), engaged community and industry leaders. Consultation with Panpanpalya occurred in February 2024, and public feedback via Our Adelaide closed on 31 January 2025. A consolidated consultation summary will be presented to the City Community Services and Culture Committee, with the draft Cultural Policy progressing to Council and public consultation before adoption in Q4 2024/25.
Resource	Development and consultation associated with the draft Cultural Policy is through existing resources.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The Cultural Policy aligns with the City of Adelaide’s Strategic Plan 2024-2028, embedding cultural objectives in decision-making. The development of a Cultural Policy will ensure inclusivity, genuine representation, and sustainable funding. Legal considerations include compliance with <i>EPBC Act 1999</i> , <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)</i> , and heritage regulations to protect Kaurna heritage and cultural sites.
Opportunities	The Cultural Policy will define Council’s role, goals, and priorities in celebrating community diversity and reinforcing Adelaide as South Australia’s civic, cultural, and commercial hub. It reflects Council’s leadership as the Capital City’s governing body and its UNESCO Creative City commitments. Success relies on alignment with Federal and State policies and strategic partnerships across government, private, and community sectors
24/25 Budget Allocation	\$15,000 is allocated from the Arts and Cultural budget for documentation design and marketing materials associated with the development of Council’s Cultural Policy.
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	It is proposed that this Policy will be supported by strategies and action plans developed in alignment with the Annual Business Plan and Budget process.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The draft City of Adelaide Cultural Policy has a project life from 2025 to 2036.
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

1. As a key action in its Strategic Plan 2024-2028, Council has committed to, 'Develop a Cultural Policy by 2024 that promotes and supports the City's unique cultural identity and opportunities.' Responsibility for the implementation of the Cultural Policy will extend to all areas of Council including subsidiaries.
2. The Cultural Policy will reflect Council's leadership role and responsibilities as the governing body for the Capital City of South Australia, its commitments to sustainable development as part of Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Music, and its responsibilities to its ratepayers and residents.
3. The Cultural Policy will aim to enable all people to participate in and contribute to the cultural life of our city, celebrate and honour our diverse and multicultural communities, and invest in Adelaide's distinctive heritage and creative sector.
4. Council does not currently have a Cultural Policy. In the absence of a Cultural Policy, delivery of cultural activity in the city remains aligned to Council's previous cultural strategy, '*Cultural Strategy A city designed for creativity 2017–2023*', which had a strong focus on arts and festivals.
5. To inform the development of the Cultural Policy, Council has endorsed public consultation on the Discussion Paper, *Culture - The Life Of Our City (Attachment A)*. A summary of this feedback will be presented to Council with the draft policy in April 2025.

Current State

6. The City of Adelaide (CoA) demonstrates a strong and ongoing commitment to championing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities, particularly the Kaurna people, through cultural recognition, Reconciliation initiatives, and strategic partnerships delivered across the organisation.
 - 6.1 Cultural mapping of the Adelaide Park Lands has been undertaken to acknowledge and highlight culturally significant sites.
 - 6.2 Strategic partnerships with many cultural organisations and groups have been established to promote Reconciliation, and to recognise Kaurna culture and connection to Country.
 - 6.3 Through the Arts & Culture grants programs, the CoA has also seen a notable increase in support for First Nations-led events, rising from 22 initiatives in 2017/18 to 69 in 2022/23.
 - 6.4 Through the First Nations Arts & Cultural Grants program in 2023/24, each funded project has attracted an average of 787 attendees and provided paid employment to 14 First Nations creatives.
 - 6.5 NAIDOC Week activations, including artwork commissions and cultural events at Rundle Mall and Art Pod, further amplify the presence and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives and cultural practitioners.
 - 6.6 Other key initiatives include the Cultural Burn in the Park Lands, the Knowledge Project, and Kids on Country.
 - 6.7 Significant public art commissions, such as the Place of Reflection, the No Fixed Address City of Music Laneway, the portrait of Auntie Shirley Peisley in the Council Chamber, and Central Market murals, celebrate and share First Nations cultures within public spaces on Kaurna Country.
 - 6.8 The City Library Aboriginal Cultural Collection, developed in consultation with Kaurna community representatives, ensures the preservation and accessibility of First Nations heritage, and Reconciliation programs are regularly delivered across City Libraries and Community Centres.

Definition of Culture

7. The proposed broad definition of 'culture' for the purpose of developing Council's Cultural Policy includes:
 - 7.1 Adelaide's cultural, creative, arts, and heritage industries
 - 7.2 The heritage, knowledge and cultural practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - 7.3 The expressions of identity, shared experience and aspirations of our diverse and multicultural communities that have shaped our society
 - 7.4 Historic and current cultural practices and events that reflect contemporary Adelaide and its broad and diverse communities.

Discussion Paper and Priorities

8. The Discussion Paper, *Culture – The Life Of Our City* sets out six priorities for a future Cultural Policy that aim to support a culturally vibrant, socially inclusive and equitable city. These priorities will be refined as a result of the consultation process and subsequently presented to Council for consideration and adoption:
 - 8.1 *People are at the Centre of our City and its Culture*

Nurture the ability for the community to connect with culture and express their creativity. Improve our city's appeal, liveability and global profile, through accessible and high-quality cultural experiences, including public art, events and festivals that reflect Adelaide's unique heritage and stories.
 - 8.2 *Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Continuous Culture*

Honour and strengthen awareness of Kaurna culture and connection to Country as central to Adelaide's identity and future.
 - 8.3 *Celebrating Multiculturalism and Respecting Diversity and Traditions*

Observe, fund and facilitate Adelaide's cultural and civic traditions including festive events and other social practices. Provide inclusive and respectful opportunities for people of all cultures, backgrounds, ages and abilities to participate in the cultural life of the city.
 - 8.4 *Adelaide is Australia's Cultural and Creative Capital*

Provide a city-wide approach to embed music, culture and heritage preservation in policy, place and community. Amplify Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Music and our leadership as Australia's creative and cultural capital.
 - 8.5 *The City's Culture is Connected to our Built and Natural Heritage*

Respect, protect and strengthen our world class architecture, cultural assets, collections, and environment. Ensure our cultural identity is easily accessible by the community through engaging and discoverable interpretation and digital resources.
 - 8.6 *Creativity and Culture Drives our City's Future*

Advance the role of culture in enriching the life of the city, our people and the environment. Raise our profile as a creative and cultural capital for the development of the city into the future and the wellbeing of local communities.

Alignment with the *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (S-RAP) 2024–2027*

9. A key priority of the Cultural Policy Discussion Paper is *Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Continuous Cultures*. To better inform the policy's development and refine this priority, we seek feedback from the Reconciliation Committee on the following questions:
 1. How can we champion Kaurna culture in our shared future in meaningful ways?
 2. What steps can we take to ensure that Kaurna and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices influence, and are represented in the city's cultural decisions?
 3. What collaborative and co-led initiatives and projects would increase the visibility of Kaurna culture in the public realm?
10. The *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (S-RAP) 2024–2027* and the opportunities of a Cultural Policy as outlined in the Discussion Paper, share a commitment to embedding First Nations cultures, Reconciliation, and heritage into the CoA's identity, policies, and development strategies.
11. The S-RAP strengthens relationships with Kaurna and other First Nations communities through respect, engagement, and Reconciliation initiatives. The Discussion Paper integrates Kaurna heritage into Adelaide's long-term cultural vision.
12. Both documents promote cultural leadership and inclusion, with the S-RAP focusing on employment, procurement, and governance, and the Discussion Paper amplifying Adelaide's status as a UNESCO Creative City of Music.
13. These documents centre Reconciliation through partnerships, cultural engagement, and public recognition, with the S-RAP driving cultural mapping, events, and naming protocols, and the Discussion Paper ensuring visibility through public spaces, festivals, and arts initiatives with a focus on storytelling and interpretation.

Benchmarking

14. The Discussion Paper and priorities within it have been benchmarked against the cultural policies of other capital cities in Australia, all which have their own respective policies, strategies and action plans relating to culture and creativity.
15. International cultural policy follows UNESCO's best practice principles, promoting cultural diversity, creativity, and sustainable urban development. As a UNESCO Creative City of Music, Adelaide is part of the [Creative Cities Network](#), fostering global cooperation and cultural vibrancy. International cultural policy is informed and guided by the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), [MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration](#), and [UNESCO's Indigenous Engagement Policy](#).
16. The [Australian Cultural Policy Revive](#) prioritises First Nations storytelling, cultural diversity, artist support, and audience engagement. National cultural policy is informed and guided by [Creative Australia's First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocols](#) and industry insights.
17. The State Government's Cultural Policy is currently in development and Administration has been engaged with counterparts in State Government on their process.
18. Alignment with the State Government's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy for South Australia](#) has been undertaken.
19. The Australian Local Government Association has held an endorsed [Arts and Culture Policy Position](#) since 2020 which outlines that the creative sector is essential to the liveability and economic sustainability of all communities.

Consultation To Date

20. In November 2024, the *Live Music Forum* brought together 100 musicians, industry professionals, and cultural leaders to discuss challenges, strengths, and strategies for fostering a diverse and thriving UNESCO Creative City of Music.
21. In December 2024, *Culture: The Life of the City Forum* brought together 100 city shapers, community and business leaders, educators, creative practitioners, producers, policy developers, planners, and cultural advocates to explore the CoA's cultural identity, opportunities, and future vision.
22. Jack Kanya Kudnuitya Buckskin, Founder of Kuma Kaaru Cultural Services, was a keynote speaker at the forum and spoke on Adelaide's evolution through diverse experiences and the integration of old and new knowledge.
23. Administration sought feedback on the Discussion Paper from Panpanpalya in February 2025. The feedback highlights the need for stronger Aboriginal representation, respect for self-determination and cultural practice, and meaningful partnerships in shaping Adelaide's cultural identity. Key themes reflected in the feedback from Panpanpalya included:
 - 23.1. *Aboriginal Representation and Visibility* – Increase Kurna presence in policies, public spaces, images, and cultural videos.
 - 23.2. *Inclusivity and Multicultural Engagement* – Ensure policies reflect all communities, strengthening cultural connections and partnerships.
 - 23.3. *Truth-Telling and Storytelling* – Commit to truth-telling through signage, exhibitions, media, and digital storytelling.
 - 23.4. *Cultural Preservation* – Support Kurna language, traditions, songlines, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing.
 - 23.5. *Council's Role and Partnerships* – Align with the Stretch-RAP 2024-27 to ensure that Cultural Policy, strengthen ties with Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, and promotes self-determination.
 - 23.6. *Kurna Heritage and Mapping* – Develop cultural trails, heritage recognition, and Kurna naming across the city.
 - 23.7. *Artistic and Cultural Recognition* – Amplify Aboriginal artists, poets, and musicians through policy and initiatives.
 - 23.8. *Action and Implementation* – Move beyond surface engagement, ensure meaningful inclusion, and embed truth-telling in civic processes.
24. Public consultation engagement activities to date have included pop-up community sessions at City of Adelaide venues including Adelaide Town Hall, Adelaide Central Markets, Art Pod, Libraries and Community Centres, industry networking and youth advisory events to engage key demographics and ensure that diverse perspectives are reflected in the feedback. This has been complemented by a social media and

online campaign to support the Cultural Policy's Our Adelaide survey which was open for submissions between December 2024 to the end of January 2025.

Next Steps

25. A consolidated consultation summary and a draft Cultural Policy will be presented to the City Community Services and Culture Committee and then to Council in April 2025, for the purposes of final public consultation and subsequent adoption by Council in Quarter 4 of the 2024/25 financial year.
26. Once adopted, the Cultural Policy will provide a framework to drive Council's strategic objectives and ensure that responsibility for culture is embedded across operational decision making.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Cultural Policy Discussion Paper, *Culture - The Life Of Our City*

Attachment B – Workshop Presentation – *Culture - The Life Of Our City*

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