

CULTURE: THE LIFE OF OUR CITY

STAGE 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

1. BACKGROUND

A key action in the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028 is to “Develop a Cultural Policy by 2024 that promotes and supports the City’s unique cultural identity and opportunities”. Between 4 November 2024 and 5 March 2025 the City of Adelaide engaged with community to inform the development of City of Adelaide’s Cultural Policy 2025-2036 to position culture, creativity and community at the heart of Adelaide’s planning for sustainable urban development over the next decade.

The engagement process confirmed that our community shares a clear and strong view about the centrality of culture to build a safe, resilient and sustainable city for future generations. The community stressed the City of Adelaide’s central role in valuing, protecting and promoting the city’s distinctive character and cultural life.

This document is a summary of the *Culture: The Life of Our City. Stage 1 Community Engagement Report*. It presents a summary of the consultation findings and how they have informed the draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036.

2. HOW WE ENGAGED AND WHO WE HEARD FROM

A total of **1,117** community members provided direct feedback during the consultation process, one of the most extensive cultural engagement efforts undertaken by the City of Adelaide. To ensure broad community representation, the consultation adopted a multi-method approach as outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Community Engagement Activities and Consultation Participants

Engagement Activity	Participation	Consultation Participants
Two targeted Stakeholder Forums hosted by the Lord Mayor Dr Jane Lomax-Smith AM	In person 200 attendees	Community, cultural and business leaders, universities and high schools, major cultural institutions, festivals, live music venues, creative practitioners and performers, policy developers and planners, peak bodies, precinct, residents and other advocacy groups.
Eight Community Pop-Up Sessions	In person 226 participants	All audiences who participate in the cultural life of the city: residents, workers, visitors, students. A targeted youth session delivered for young people aged 13 to 17.
Advisory Groups and Subsidiaries	In person 5 engagements	City of Adelaide Advisory Groups and Subsidiaries: Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel, Reconciliation Committee, Kadaltilla/Adelaide Park Lands Authority, Adelaide Economic Development Agency, and the Adelaide Central Market Authority.
Eleven Submissions	Written + In Person 11 submissions	9 emails submissions and 2 community meetings documented
51-day Our Adelaide online community survey	Written 675 responses	When asked to define their participation in city life, survey respondents had the opportunity to choose more than one option, reflecting that some individuals can have multiple key relationships with the City. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29% CoA resident (49% 10+ years residents) • 41% City worker

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% Visitors • 7% CoA based cultural organisations • 7% CoA based businesses • 6.5% Student in the city • 3.4% Art studio/creative space in CoA <p>32% of survey respondents identified as part of the following demographic groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ+ (112 responses) • People with a disability (81 responses) • Culturally diverse communities (68 responses) • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (15 Responses). <p>The age distribution of survey respondents was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.5% young people under 25 • 27% people 25-39 • 35% 40-54 • 28% 55 to 74 • 3.6% 75 years+.
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3. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FINDINGS

Overall, the public consultation confirmed that culture is a crucial part of the city's life and future. Cultural experiences as being fundamental to attracting people to live in, visit and invest in our city, reflecting and expressing our identity shaped by our community, heritage, history, and values.

The community identified the following existing cultural strengths that define Adelaide's unique character and liveability including:

- Cultural experiences for everyone.
- Festivals and celebrations.
- Outdoor experiences.
- Nightlife and live music venues.
- Built heritage and memorials.
- Diversity of traditions and expressions.
- Public art, sculptures, and murals.
- Community connections and belonging.
- Nature connected experiences.
- Pedestrian friendly and city layout.
- Central Market and food culture.
- First Nations culture visibility in the life of the city.
- Street level culture (food trucks, resident and neighbourhood activities, precinct events)

Community-identified priorities for shaping Adelaide's cultural future:

The community expressed strong expectations that the City of Adelaide will continue to play a leadership role in fostering cultural development, seeing Council as critical in ensuring a vibrant, inclusive, sustainable city. Consultation feedback emphasised the centrality of culture in shaping the city's future, with a clear call for Council to value, protect, and promote the city's distinctive character and cultural life.

To achieve the community's vision for the cultural life of the city over the next decade the community

identified, through the community survey, the following initiatives for the City of Adelaide to prioritise over the next decade:

- Accessible, inclusive, and affordable experiences for all, including transportation improvements.
- Creating spaces for cultural expression and experiences year-round, day and night.
- Amplify our creative capital through creative industries growth, partnerships, and funding to retain young and creative talent.
- Protection of natural heritage, environmental sustainability, and climate action.
- Public safety and wellbeing.
- Cultural and built heritage protection and revitalisation balancing modernisation.
- Reconciliation and First Nations cultural leadership.
- Effective governance and Council's leadership.

Table 2 presents the community vision for Adelaide's Cultural Life and how it informed the draft Cultural Policy 2025-2036.

Table 2. Community Vision for Adelaide's Cultural Life and Cultural Policy Application

Vision	Cultural Policy Principle: Amplifying our Creative Capital
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships and co-investment maximise opportunities for the growth of Adelaide's creative industries. • Investment in local creatives, enterprises, and the local creative industries. • Adelaide's UNESCO City of Music designation better utilised. • International collaborations and exchanges are balanced with support to local creatives and stories. • Education is affordable and there are enough career opportunities to retain young people and cultural enterprises in Adelaide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplify Adelaide's UNESCO City of Music designation to showcase the city's cultural life, talent, and stories on the global stage. • Support cultural jobs and creative careers to position culture and creativity as key drivers of economic development, employment, and innovation. • Balance Adelaide's unique cultural identity with opportunities for international exchange and collaboration.
Vision	Cultural Policy Principle: Culturally Inclusive and Socially Connected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to culture should be equitable for all. • Barriers to cultural participation including affordability, cost and model of current transport services, city safety and accessibility are reduced or removed. • Adelaide's walkability and transportation connectivity should be prioritised to strengthen cultural access. • A safe city that supports people to thrive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable all people to contribute and participate in the life of the city. • Ensure that access to Adelaide's culture is easy and affordable for everyone with a focus on marginalised and vulnerable populations including young people, older people, people living with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women and LGBTIQ+ communities • Promote a cultural life and creative workforce in Adelaide that reflects the diversity of its communities.

Vision	Cultural Policy Principle: Reconciliation and Truth Telling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Kurna and First Nations to increase visibility in city design, events, and public spaces. • Truth telling and cultural preservation including intergenerational knowledge sharing, cultural burning, language revival. • Events where local communities connect with Kurna and First Nations peoples. • Kurna and First Nations representation in cultural leadership and decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honour and strengthen awareness of Kurna culture and connection to Country. • Celebrate Kurna and First Nations culture and connection to Country • Support Kurna and First Nations-led cultural initiatives including cultural revitalisation through language, storytelling, cultural burns and other cultural and creative practices.
Vision	Cultural Policy Principle: Preserving Cultural Heritage, Embracing Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving and revitalising Adelaide's built heritage, including historical and world class architecture, sandstone buildings, cultural assets, collections, and live music venues. • Preserving the Adelaide Park Lands, the city's green spaces and natural heritage as central to the life of the city. • Balance modernisation with heritage conservation and the preservation of Adelaide's unique identity. • Storytelling and interpretation of Adelaide's unique history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and revitalise the city's cultural heritage, including world-class architecture, iconic cultural venues, and collections, and the Adelaide Park Lands, open spaces and natural environment. • Ensure people, culture and creativity are at the centre of urban and environmental planning, design and development decisions in the city. • Celebrate our local character, food, culture, customs, social practices and traditions, places and spaces. Celebrate our local character, food, culture, customs, social practices and traditions, places and spaces.
Vision	Cultural Policy Principle: Creating Space for Cultural Expression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a year-round cultural events calendar beyond seasonal spikes. • Balance funding major events/festivals and funding smaller grassroots events and creatives. • Dedicated and accessible cultural spaces. • Adequate music and cultural infrastructure • Planning considers cultural infrastructure requirements. • Adelaide's diversity of cultural offerings and venues is visible and promoted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed creativity and culture into the everyday life of the city. • Invest in and expand the city's cultural infrastructure, including activating under-utilised spaces, to enhance Adelaide's appeal, foster community and create a sense of belonging. • Ensure that creativity, along with Adelaide's unique arts, cultural experiences, and stories, is easily accessible, fueling the city's vitality day and night, and all year-round.

4. COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING THEIR VISION FOR ADELAIDE'S CULTURAL FUTURE

The obstacles that community raised in the consultation highlighted clear areas of priority for Council's Cultural Policy. Addressing these concerns will be critical to ensuring that Adelaide's cultural life is inclusive, economically viable and resilient, with a unique identity that is locally loved and internationally renowned, supporting the city's projected growth over the next decade.

Community- Identified Obstacles	Impact
Limited funding for arts and culture	Constraining cultural sector growth, city vibrancy and community participation.
Affordability and cost of living	Impacting communities' ability to visit and participate in the cultural life of the city.
Lack of visibility and support for local creatives	Challenge to attract and retain talent.
Public transport cost, frequency, availability and accessibility	Impacting communities' ability to visit and participate in the cultural life of the city.
Policy and planning	Decision making, services and programs that don't adequately meet community need.
Overdevelopment	Loss of cultural and natural spaces and our unique character due to redevelopment.
Accessibility barriers	Challenges for vulnerable populations in accessing cultural events and venues and moving around the city.
Perception of city safety	Impacting community willingness to visit and participate in the cultural life of the city.
Climate Change	Barrier for the community to visit and participate in the cultural life of the city in days of extreme weather events.