



May 2025

draft Creative Wyndham Strategy 2026-2030 -
Community Engagement Report - Phase 2 -
June 2026



Engagement overview

In 2024, Hodyl & Co were engaged to undertake extensive community and stakeholder engagement to help shape the future of creativity in Wyndham. With Wyndham continuing to grow rapidly, changing opportunities emerging across the community, and the refresh of the Wyndham 2040 Community Vision underway, this was an important time to review and renew Council's vision and direction for a creative Wyndham.

This first stage of the engagement process included an online community survey, which received 268 responses, along with in-person engagement activities that captured a broad range of aspirations, ideas, experiences and challenges. Insights gathered through this first stage of engagement informed the development of the draft Creative Wyndham Strategy 2026–2030.

The draft Strategy responds to community and industry feedback and recognises the important role arts and culture play in wellbeing, social connection, learning, economic opportunity and placemaking. It also acknowledges the need to support and plan for the creative industries as part of Wyndham's continued growth and development.

Feedback gathered to inform the draft Strategy included input from:

- Creative practitioners
- Community members
- Young people
- Cultural groups
- Traditional Owners
- Industry stakeholders

Stage two of the engagement process involved the public exhibition of the draft Creative Wyndham Strategy 2026–2030, which was open for community feedback on The Loop from 29 April to 27 May 2026. The draft Strategy was shaped by insights gathered during the earlier engagement phase, with community and stakeholder feedback directly informing the goals and actions outlined within the document.

While the overall direction of the Strategy has been established, this second stage of engagement provided the community with an opportunity to identify any gaps, provide further feedback and help refine the Strategy before it is finalised. Community members could provide feedback online via a survey on The Loop, with the option to contact the Arts Team by phone or email if they had questions or required additional support.

We received 35 online survey responses. See Appendix 1 for detailed demographic information and Appendix 2 for deidentified raw data from the surveys.

How did the community get involved?

The below tables outline the ways we engaged with the community and the activities undertaken to promote the engagement.

 35 survey contributions	 951 page views on The Loop page	 753 total visitors to The Loop page
--	--	--

Online promotion	Paid advertisements and organic posts were run via social media. Results on the \$400 four-week paid advertisement include: • Reach: 18,246 • Link clicks: 514 The organic ads results were as follows: • Engagements: 8 • Reach: 3,109 • Link clicks: 18
Other communication activities	• 7,855 Recipients - May monthly Loop Newsletter • 1,998 Recipients – May People's Advisory Panel Members • 3,318 Recipients - May Wyndham Arts Newsletter • Media Release picked up by: ▪ Wyndham TV ▪ Wyndham Star Weekly • Digital screen tiles (including a QR code to The Loop page) at all Community Centres and Facilities

We received 35 online surveys, however, only 31 of those respondents provided feedback on the draft Creative Wyndham Strategy.

The below highlights the feedback received **via The Loop online survey** during the engagement process, noting that one response may fall under more than one theme.

Question: Is there something you'd like us to consider before the Strategy is finalised?

Theme	Percent	Count
Theme 1: Accessible and fit-for-purpose creative spaces and infrastructure A strong and recurring theme was the need for more creative spaces, facilities and infrastructure across Wyndham. Many respondents felt existing spaces are overcrowded, limited in functionality, or not designed to support creative practice effectively. “Inadequate ceramics and pottery facilities, particularly at Saltwater” “Desire for flexible, smaller-scale creative hubs and rehearsal spaces” “Limited access to venues outside standard business hours”	32%	10
Theme 2: Support for local artists, creative practitioners and creative industries Many respondents expressed concern that local artists and creative practitioners are not sufficiently supported, engaged or prioritised within Wyndham’s creative ecosystem. Feedback highlighted a desire for more direct involvement from local creatives in shaping strategy and decision-making and a note around creative wellbeing. “Support for grassroots and locally led creative activity” “Mentoring, peer support and professional development” “Building a healthy and resilient creative sector”	26%	8
Theme 3: Performing arts, music and cultural programming A significant portion of feedback related specifically to performing arts, music and theatre infrastructure. Respondents identified gaps in equitable spaces across the municipality, venue availability, functionality and support for live performance. “Desire for increased local programming and use of existing cultural venues” “Support for smaller, flexible theatre and rehearsal spaces” “Support for local bands and musicians”	26%	8

Theme 4: Inclusive, diverse and community-led creative opportunities Respondents expressed a strong desire for creative activities and programming that are inclusive, culturally diverse and accessible to all ages, interests and backgrounds. There was also some emphasis around the importance of ensuring creativity is embedded across the community and not limited to centralised venues or specific artforms. “Need for affordable and accessible opportunities for working people, young people and seniors” “Equitable access across Wyndham’s suburbs” “Support for broader definitions of creativity, including music, crafts, making, design and performance”	19%	6
Other feedback not directly relevant to the Creative Wyndham Strategy or outside the policy scope. • Requests for road safety improvements • Requests for an additional aquatic centre • Requests for a Hoyts cinema • Political comments • No comment or replied ‘no’	39%	12
Total		44

Next steps



Appendix 1: Who did we hear from?

The below information highlights who we heard from during our engagement via The Loop survey.

Age Group	%	Count
12-17	3%	1
25-34	20%	7
35-44	11%	4
45-54	26%	9
55-64	23%	8
65+	17%	6
Total	100%	35

Gender	%	Count
Female	66%	23
Male	29%	10
Prefer not to say	5%	2
Total	100%	35

Suburb	%	Count
Hoppers Crossing	9%	3
Laverton	3%	1
Manor Lakes	9%	3
Point Cook	12%	4
Tarneit	12%	4
Truganina	5%	2
Werribee	37%	13
Werribee South	5%	2
Williams Landing	3%	1
Wyndham Vale	5%	2
Total	100%	35

Identity	Yes %	Yes count	No / Prefer not to say %	No / Prefer not to say count
A person living with disability and/or someone caring for a person living with disability	23%	8	77%	27
An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	0%	0	100%	35
A person who identifies as LGBTQIA	9%	3	91%	32

Appendix 2: Feedback from engagement

Below is the feedback received from the engagement question: Is there something you'd like us to consider before the Strategy is finalised?

I would love the council to consider a bigger space for the opportunity of having pottery classes. Currently I personally attend one in point cook, however this space is small, shared between 8 students and 1 teacher with also a small room for storage of our work while it's still fragile and needs drying. While I am grateful for this space, to have one room for all of these people plus equipment is not sustainable. A bigger space where we can create and also be able to create bigger pieces and be able to possibly showcase the work we do would be ideal. I appreciate you taking the time to consider my suggestion as pottery classes is often overlooked in the arts

While I was interviewed a couple of years back about what the Wyndham Theater company needs in relation to the new Tarniet proposal I have heard nothing since. I would have expected that there would have been more face to face discussion to understand what we need to support our creative activities as part of the development phase of this strategy. Artistic development is often overshadowed by cultural activities because the latter often prioritizes immediate, social engagement, community cohesion, or economic outcomes over the slow, and often challenging process of creating new art. In summary, artistic development is a slow, often solitary process of discovery, while cultural activities are typically designed to be fast, inclusive and publicly engaging, making them more attractive to funders and policy makers.

For this to be meaningful there needs to be more input from the practitioners to fully understand what they need to continue their arts journey in Wyndham.

Much of the focus appears to be for venues holding ready-made events. This is great if always importing creativity, but to encourage creativity within Wyndham there needs to be more rehearsal and covered spaces.

We don't need more community spaces. It is overpopulated as is. It's getting quite ridiculous

I would like you to invest in improved ceramics facilities at Saltwater. I am currently taking an evening lesson there. I actually work evenings but I take my lesson on my only evening off. In any case, I would like to be able to take lessons during the day, have access to studio practice time and to be able to learn other skills such as handbuilding and slip casting. Unfortunately to do any of these things I have to look for options outside of Wyndham

Inadequate facilities and storage: The current studio setup at Saltwater Art Studio does not adequately support the needs of existing pottery classes, particularly in relation to storage, equipment access, and workflow.

Inadequate facilities and storage: The current studio setup at Saltwater Art Studio does not adequately support the needs of existing pottery classes, particularly in relation to storage, equipment access, and workflow.

Unable to meet community demand: Demand for ceramics is high, but current limitations restrict the number, variety, and timing of classes that can be offered.

Broader class offerings: Improved facilities would allow Saltwater Art Studio to offer hand-building, sculpture, children's classes, daytime wheel classes, and classes for seniors and pensioners.

Open studio and skills development: Students would benefit from access outside regular class times, including off-term periods and weekends, to practise, refine their technique, and continue their artistic development.

Improved ceramics workflow: A dedicated or better-equipped ceramics room would address repeated concerns about crowding, equipment movement, storage, kiln access, and overall workflow efficiency.

Programs, events, and activities need to be disseminated more widely and through more avenues than currently.

The introduction of free to access/low cost Makerspaces in Wyndham Libraries

Please consider craft events to also be held at night or weekends so you also include and cater for people that work.

I wish there could be activities that people can attend like painting or sewing and hopefully in Manor Lakes

No

Na

We need more public creative spaces, to complement existing green spaces, playgrounds and public structures.

we need a movie cinema and another aquatic center.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the creative strategy. There is much great material to work on.

Context

Firstly I am thrilled that at last Wyndham will have a creative strategy and given my local active participation and leadership in the arts, I take every opportunity to give input to help ensure the performing arts element is included and money spent wisely. Any comments below are not reflective of individuals arts council staff (many of whom I think are fantastic to work with) but reflect the overall system of prioritisation and planning in the arts.

I think face-to-face discussions with leaders in Wyndham arts is vital – the practitioners, networkers, arts company leaders, who need and will actively directly contribute to arts in Wyndham. Our input will give clarity, deep insight and ensure the strategy is embraced by the community.

TIMING

I have asked for local performing arts support for over 20 years and nothing has changed. Feedback has been given by others and many other artists through surveys, budgeting input/surveys, discussion groups but as we have not moved forward in any sense - there is a sense of urgency now.

FIT-FOR-PURPOSE – this is mentioned many times which I'm super pleased to see as much of the gaps centre around NOT having 'fit-for-purpose'. But worse still, money spent with very little outcome as the spaces are not built fit-for-purpose. This usually means there was little or no direct involvement from targeted users. So great to see the recognition of this.

WHAT WE NEED – I've been saying this for years and I'll repeat - a much smaller (much cheaper) flexible simple space where creatives can network, develop, connect. 120-150 seater, retractable seating, simple bar (small kitchen) and toilets.

We could start with a shed. We will build the audiences if we have regular access and storage. This could be organised within a year. There's enough of us to run it, fill it and hire out when not in use. Getting developers to include arts funding would help.

SPECIFIC FEEDBACK TO THE STRATEGY

Page 3 –

This is all great goals. I would add – as recognised by global research shared via the A New Approach group – there is huge economic return of investment in the arts if invested wisely.

'be measurable and transparent' – it must be recognised in that being involved in the arts often has huge flow-on positive effectives that by their very nature are almost impossible to measure. E.g. my drama club participant through local high school has openly shared that if it weren't for drama club he would be dead'. He has now finished his degree in film production and is an active fully functioning and valuable member of the community.

In other words it must be acknowledged that involvement in the arts has an inherent value which has been supported by ongoing global research.

Page 5

Please change 'emerging creative sector' to 'ever growing creative sector'.

We've always been here. We've just been largely ignored and I've been advocating for support for past 20 years,

Partnerships – yes great to recognise that partnerships work – big tick.

Page 11

'providing and managing creative infrastructure' – I would change 'managing' to 'supporting'. Does council need to manage them all. Again, my first and foremost need for supporting performing arts in Wyndham is a small blackbox style simple theatre we can run and grow our own audiences. With Council guidelines followed, we as a collective arts group would have to have our own management team to run the facility and ensure priority is given to performing arts groups but then gaps are hired out.

Page 12 – big red flat for this table of facilities. I would question 'purpose built' – without including who they are purpose built for – it cannot be stated. Out of that list - an independent theatre company could not use any of these rehearse and perform a small play.

I was part of an online discussion via Maribyrnong City Council's request for feedback on their plans for a new big theatre and outdoor arts space. I mostly listened. Loud feedback from many who attended was – who is going to use it? – we won't. One artist said 'I wish council would stop labelling an arts outdoor space and expecting artists to activate it. We can't!'

Another example:

- the 'bus-stop' built at a huge cost in the front of the culture seems an example of wasting precious funds. I was told by the then manager that I could use it to perform – I asked how on earth could I do that when it is built almost on top of one of the of the busiest noisiest round-about in Werribee. It is barely used. I recently walked past a busker performing there. No audience just loads of cars driving past. I had a brief chat – he said 'tough gig'.
- I have worked with an African group who tried to rehearse in a community centre trying to hear themselves over the amplified music. It didn't work. They gave up in that space.
- Same for myself rehearsing The Yellow Line – small space and amplified music in next room. Impossible to effectively rehearse.

Page 13 – I would question the value of '140 public and private locations across the municipality host creative activity'. I think it massively overstates what Wyndham has to offer for artists which is not helpful for a strategy as someone not working in the arts could presume we then don't need much more. It massively overstates 'fit-for-purpose' and undercalls genuine need.

Overselling what is there now, undersells need and is not helpful to developing a strategy.

Page 15, Key Themes – yes great as it states real needs now.

Page 16

Key Challenge – For many years Wyndham hasn't had a creative strategy – it hasn't existed. Most municipalities are updating their arts strategies and Wyndham with a population of 300K plus - is starting. That is a challenge as we're starting from ground zero (except for the public art strategy) most segments in art.

Under Capital and Operation Funding – OPPORTUNITY add 'any planning of arts facilities involve direct input from potential users.'

Overall it's high level speak that hopefully we as artists get to have input to ensure actions reflect goals and target audience and make the best use of scarce funds.

YES LEAVE PREET, YOU ARE NOT WANTED AS MAYOR

No

On online survey is fine but is a step only . We have filled out many over the years but nothing has changed so clearly much is missed in this narrow process. I suggest, Before it is finalised - Have a think tank of a smaller group of local arts practitioners who are local leaders in the arts industry - they are the users on the ground, connectors, networkers, creators. You might then get deep insight and clarity to end up with a fantastic strategy we can all embrace.

More multi cultural festivals and/events that cater for all cultures, stop the ones that target 1 culture only. Create inclusive for all
Realise that being creative involves far more than your typical "art" things like painting, drawing, building art displays etc

Music and its performance is one of the greats arts of the world. Within the City of Wyndham there is a severe lack of decent sized performing arts venues. We have the Cultural Centre and Encore Events centre but they are far from affordable to local no for profit community groups like wind or brass bands.

The Cultural Centre is a good venue to perform in but Encore is horrible. Poor acoustics, small stage - poor visibility of performers on the stage etc.

This issue is common across the whole western suburbs so not just Wyndham.

Affordable hiring of the cultural centre. Subsidised for schools who are hiring with lcsea under 1000 like programs for eastern schools on low socio areas or demographic.
More workshops for high school students at the cultural centre.
Collaborative arts show for high achieving high school Wyndham students.
Cultural centre to work with productions linked to VCE playlist.
Fix band pit at cultural centre ASAP.
Orchestral workshops and opportunities for high school students

Community consultation is very important, why don't we see the consultation with local artists, creatives, curators or any individual who actually making living from art? Why don't the council engages with us, the local artists, who can provide firsthand experience and feedback?

Can't say at the very start of this survey

Something more for road safety

Wyndham Cultural Centre needs to be utilize so much more for evening Tribute bands and concert similar to GAC in Geelong both are Council own premises. Cultural Centre is under used except for children's, Art and Literacy shows.

A dedicated pottery studio to support all levels of experiences. Classes, open studio, businesses, gallery etc.
efore the Strategy is finalised, we encourage Council to more explicitly embed creative worker wellbeing and sustainable practice within the action plan.

The Strategy rightly recognises the value of arts and culture for community connection, identity and wellbeing. We would also encourage Council to recognise the wellbeing needs of the people delivering this work, including artists, producers, facilitators, arts workers, volunteers and small creative organisations.

Creative workers often operate in project-based, under-resourced and emotionally demanding environments. This can create risks around burnout, isolation, financial stress and unsustainable workloads. Supporting a thriving creative sector means supporting the people who make creative activity possible.

We recommend Council consider including actions such as:

creative wellbeing and burnout prevention programs for local artists and arts workers
mental health literacy and psychosocial safety training for creative organisations and community arts leaders
wellbeing-informed funding and commissioning practices, including fair pay, realistic timelines and safe working conditions
peer connection, mentoring and referral pathways for creatives experiencing stress or isolation
evaluation measures that track whether creatives feel more connected, confident, supported and able to sustain their practice

This would strengthen the Strategy by ensuring Wyndham's creative future is not only vibrant and inclusive, but also healthy, resilient and sustainable.

Yes please. This is something I've also discussed with one of the Councilors. I'm part of the Western Union Writers (WUW) group, and I would strongly like these points to be included in the strategy as being a writer myself.

- Establish a BIPOC Creative Advisory & Programming Group
- Establish programs dedicated to BIPOC Creatives and Writers

- Support for Independent Publishers & Writers
- Library Grants & Acquisition for BIPOC Writers
- Annual Flagship Arts & Culture Event or Literary Festival
- Establish a Creative Directory & Communication Platform
- Poetry Slam & Spoken Word Platforms and other similar stages for Creatives

To the Wyndham City Council Arts Team, I am writing to formally submit my feedback regarding the draft Creative Wyndham Strategy 2026–2030. I am highly supportive of the council's focus on developing our local creative future, but I want to strongly emphasize that we desperately need these arts and music initiatives expanded into the Western growth corridor—especially in Truganina, where there is currently an absolute lack of local entertainment and community activations. Specifically, I want to see the council prioritize and implement the following initiatives over the next four years:

More live music venues: Proactively support and open up local spaces—such as neighbourhood pubs, community centres, and suburban public parks—to host regular live music gigs and acoustic performances.

Bigger, diverse festivals: Expand and fund larger, highly inclusive multicultural food and music festivals that celebrate our diverse community across the entire municipality.

All-ages events: Introduce dedicated, alcohol-free live music gigs specifically curated for teenagers and young people to experience safe community entertainment.

Free and affordable creative spaces: Provide affordable or free studio and rehearsal spaces across Wyndham so local bands and emerging musicians have cheap, accessible places to practice, collaborate, and refine their craft. We need equitable access to culture and nightlife across the whole municipality. Focusing these investments into Truganina and the surrounding Western suburbs will transform our local neighborhoods from quiet residential blocks into vibrant, connected places to live. Thank you for considering my input to help fine-tune and strengthen the final strategy before it is presented to the Council in July.

I would love the council to consider a bigger space for the opportunity of having pottery classes. Currently I personally attend one in point cook, however this space is small, shared between 8 students and 1 teacher with also a small room for storage of our work while it's still fragile and needs drying. While I am grateful for this space, to have one room for all of these people plus equipment is not sustainable. A bigger space where we can create and also be able to create bigger pieces and be able to possibly showcase the work we do would be ideal. I appreciate you taking the time to consider my suggestion as pottery classes is often overlooked in the arts.

While I was interviewed a couple of years back about what the Wyndham Theater company needs in relation to the new Tarniet proposal I have heard nothing since. I would have expected that there would have been more face to face discussion to understand what we need to support our creative activities as part of the development phase of this strategy. Artistic development is often overshadowed by cultural activities because the latter often prioritizes immediate, social engagement, community cohesion, or economic outcomes over the slow, and often challenging process of creating new art. In summary, artistic development is a slow, often solitary process of discovery, while cultural activities are typically designed to be fast, inclusive and publicly engaging, making them more attractive to funders and policy makers.

For this to be meaningful there needs to be more input from the practitioners to fully understand what they need to continue their arts journey in Wyndham.

Much of the focus appears to be for venues holding ready-made events. This is great if always importing creativity, but to encourage creativity within Wyndham there needs to be more rehearsal and covered spaces.

We don't need more community spaces. It is overpopulated as is. It's getting quite ridiculous