

Creative Maroondah Strategy 2026 - 2030

Round 2 Consultation Summary

Consultation Overview

The Creative Maroondah Strategy 2026–2030 provides a framework for the delivery of priority areas for creative services in partnership with the Maroondah community over the next four years and replaces the current Arts and Cultural Development Strategy (2020–2025).

Informed through strategic alignment with the Council Plan, Maroondah 2050, current policy directions, and best practice, this strategy recognises the transformative role of creativity in shaping vibrant, resilient, and inclusive communities.

The development of the Creative Maroondah Strategy 2026–2030 was shaped by extensive community and industry consultation and engagement, with 5,191 responses across all consultation platforms and activities, resulting in significant data that directly shaped the strategy themes and priorities.

The strategy is supported by six strategic outcome areas of Creative Community, Places, Programs, Partnerships, Industry and Communications that deliver the vision of “*A vibrant, creative and connected community*”.

Consultation Activities

- **Your Say Community Consultation Round 1:** Through the Your Say Consultation Survey, we gathered input from over 167 residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
- **Targeted Stakeholders:** Engagement with key internal Council services, local artists, creative businesses, cultural organisations, and educators provided sector-specific insights, representing around 180 contributions.
- **Café Consult:** Interactive sessions at the Council Cafe at Maroondah Festival enabled us to connect with families, young people, and culturally diverse, receiving a total of 4,680 contributions from around 1,306 people.
- **Council Advisory Committees:** Feedback was sought through workshops with five of Maroondah’s Advisory Committees, including the Arts, Disability, Environment, Liveability, Safety and Amenity, Community Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committees; plus the Youth Wellbeing Advocates Group and the Reconciliation Partnership Group, representing around 120 contributions.
- **CMT & Council Briefing:** The draft strategy was presented to CMT on 9 February 2026, and then at Councillor Briefing on 16 February 2026. Feedback provided by Councillors was directly input into the draft survey that was presented for Round 2 consultation.
- **Your Say Community Consultation Round 2:** The updated draft strategy was posted on Your Say and sought survey inputs over a 6 week period, resulting in 44 responses, plus direct consultation with MAAC, Maroondah Reconciliation Partnership Group and Youth Wellbeing Network. Rich feedback was provided regarding the action priorities, and gap analysis which is summarised in the remaining sections of this document.

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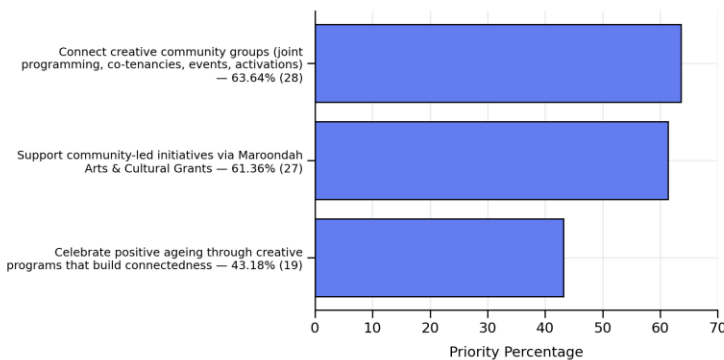
Survey Contributions

- 44 survey contributions
- Genders represented: 75% female; 20% male; 2.5% non-binary; 2.5% prefer not to say
- Ages represented: 15years - 84 years, most were 40 - 69yrs
- Suburbs: 95% Maroondah, 5% adjoining Council areas
- Past contributors: 20% contributed to Round 1 consultation; 80% new contributors

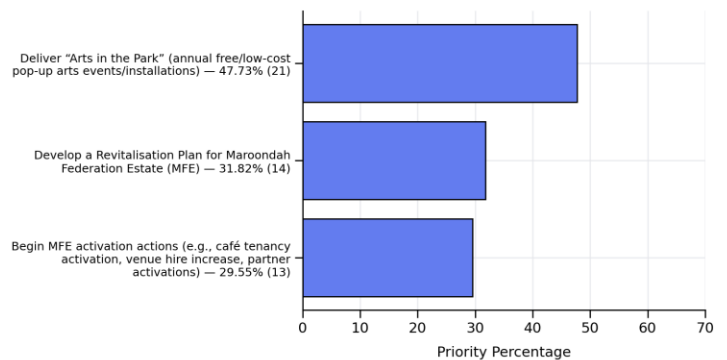
Priority Actions

Respondents selected their top three actions for each outcome area, summarised as follows, and reflected in the strategy as Years 1 & 2 priorities, or ongoing Years 1-4 deliverables.

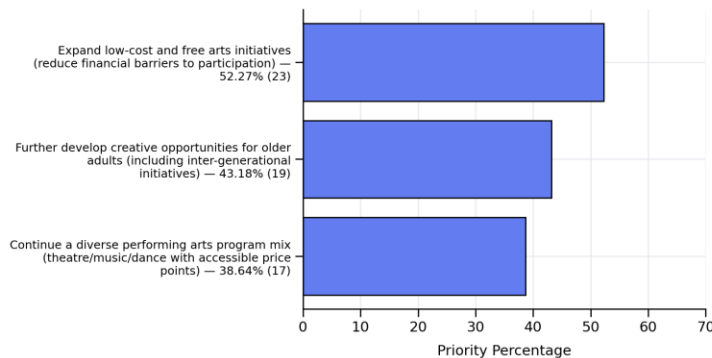
Creative Community — top priorities



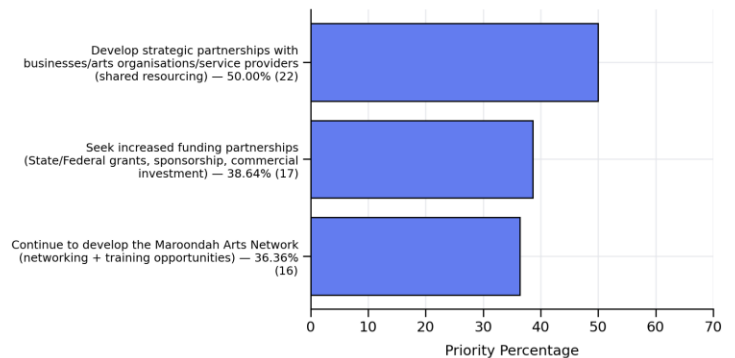
Creative Places — top priorities



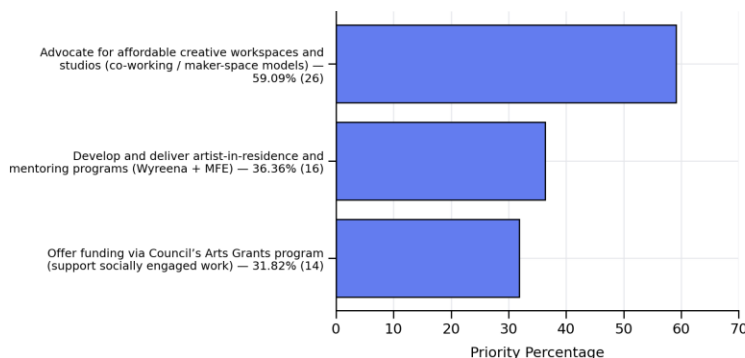
Creative Programs — top priorities



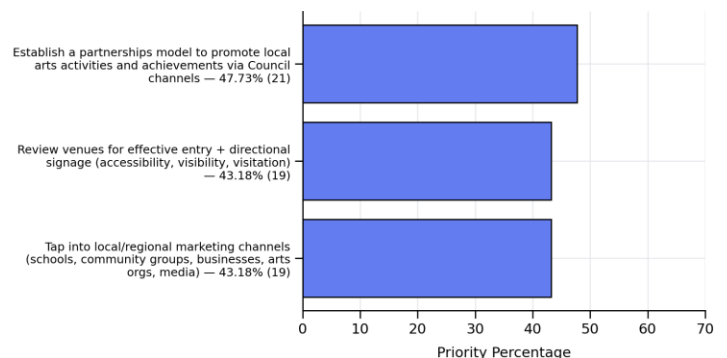
Creative Partnerships — top priorities



Creative Industry — top priorities



Creative Communications — top priorities



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Feedback on the Strategy Action Plan

Survey respondents were asked to provide comment on the action plan, and specifically if ‘anything was missing’. Overall, the feedback was incredibly positive, and key inputs have not altered the strategy direction in any way, instead reaffirm the importance of key directions, placing greater emphasis on selected items to expand in detail. A summary of this feedback along with the actions taken to address these inputs within the final strategy is captured in the table below.

| Theme / gap area | Feedback themes | Actions Taken to address |
|---|---|--|
| No gaps identified by 80% of respondents | Respondents felt the draft was already comprehensive and did not identify missing actions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action, positive feedback noted. |
| Broaden the definition of “arts/creative” | Concern that the Strategy reads as weighted toward visual/fine arts, with performing arts and other creative practices less visible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added a new principle to expand the scope of creative expression ref; Expanded language and glossary to reflect expanded reference to performing arts. |
| Performing arts pathways + local opportunities | Requests for clearer development pathways for local performing artists, including ways to connect, collaborate, and create new work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added new action item 3.2 |
| Affordable performance spaces for community groups | Community bands/theatre groups want practical support, especially affordable rehearsal/performance venues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded items 3.2 and 3.3 |
| Affordable/secure studios & workspaces | Desire for more artist workspaces: permanent studios, medium-term tenancies, and pop-up/project spaces. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded item 2.17 |
| Place-based activation specifics (MFE, café, music venue) | Some respondents nominated practical missing actions for Maroondah Federation Estate (MFE). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Café tenancy is part of Item 2.12, added music/arts pop ups to this item; Wont state that MFE be a music venue unless this comes out of Items 2.11 & 2.13 |
| Identity and suburb distinctiveness | Feedback that the Strategy should more explicitly address how Council helps shape identity—supporting distinct suburb identities while building collective belonging. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded description of Item 2.4 to include specifics around site, village identity & place. |
| Ambition: more exposure, residencies, awards & exchange | Need for stronger cultural development through access to significant exhibitions, spaces, awards and development programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated and expanded Items 1.10 & 2.17 to highlight awards and spaces Various arts mentoring & training references reinforced throughout. |

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|---|--|---|
| Innovation/excellence + socially engaged practice | Concern that funding/criteria could over-emphasise “community benefit” and exclude ambitious/experimental or socially engaged work that sparks dialogue. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update to Item 1.2 to reflect balance of grant purpose. Item 3.14 also expanded to reflect Council’s role in supporting new work by community. |
| Health & wellbeing / cross-sector partnerships | Suggestion to explicitly link arts strategy delivery with health outcomes and cross-sector funding/partnerships (hospitals/care facilities). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded item 1.5 to specify services including health and wellbeing joint arts initiatives |
| Accessibility (more concrete measures) | Requests for more specific accessibility commitments beyond general statements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Item 2.8 to be more specific and measurable |
| Improve lay-person readability | Some feedback focused on too greater use of arts language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated glossary to more plain English Reviewed whole document for less industry language, greater accessibility |
| Wayfinding / signage (venue visibility) | A small number of comments flagged practical visibility issues for civic arts venues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included wayfinding as part of accessibility in Item 2.8 |

The final Creative Maroondah Strategy 2026 - 2030 is now fully reflective of all elements of consultation, and ready for adoption by Council.