



# CREATIVE ACTION PLAN 2021



*Northern Rivers  
Community Gallery  
& Ignite Studios*

**NORTHERN RIVERS COMMUNITY GALLERY  
& IGNITE STUDIOS**

Cover Image: Jolene Maleficent, Artist at Work in the performative act of creating her work (courtesy of the artist)  
Image: (right) Dubayjar Mindjelah Dancers perform at the opening of Ignite Studios



## Acknowledgements

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

Ballina Shire Council and the Gallery acknowledges that we are here on the land of the Bundjalung people. The Bundjalung people are the traditional owners of this land and are part of the oldest surviving continuous culture in the world.

### **Community Support**

The Council, as the operator of the NRCG, and Council staff recognise the numerous volunteers who energetically fulfill various roles and give freely of their time at the NRCG.



Image: (above) BAM National Art Prize in the Gallery - Judges, Brett Addlington and Susi Mudiman selecting the winning artwork  
(right) Schools Arts and Literacy Program school visit in the Gallery

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## Introduction

This plan's intent is to provide a clear framework to guide NRCG's operations, creative programming and infrastructure development as a pathway to further consolidate NRCG as a major community engaged multi-arts facility of national significance. This plan will be reviewed within a five year period to ensure relevance as a living strategy to adapt and respond to the evolving priorities of the infrastructure and arts and cultural activities of the NRCG into the future.

The provenance of NRCG as a community managed Gallery space has played a significant role in shaping the unique focus underpinning its core operating principles of access, equity and participation.

Since commencing operations in 2007 the NRCG has established itself as an important community engaged cultural institution, distinct from the Regional Gallery model, NRCG programs are shaped by curatorial collaboration and conversation with the national artistic and Northern Rivers community, and community aspirations as they evolve, delivering accessible, participatory arts programs in the Northern Rivers.

Whilst the NRCG has celebrated consistent growth across all areas since commencing operations, the implementation of participation-based arts and cultural programs commencing in 2016 with the schools arts and literacy program through to the establishment of Ignite Studios in 2018 saw attendance numbers sky rocket by 30% from 15,300 in 2015 to 20,705 in 2016 and jumping another 28% by 2019 reaching 27,616 in overall visitation.

These statistics, combined with visitor survey data has informed the development of NRCG programming to date and form a central consideration for the priorities mapped within this plan as a niche opportunity to further expand on and develop innovative participation-based multi-arts experiences for the region.

Central to the continued success of NRCG is ensuring a resource and management structure to increase

audience reach, attract core program partners, support local artists and creative industry and increase revenue stream and funding opportunities.

The NRCG is at a pivotal moment of evolution from it's early years as a gallery solely presenting artworks through an annual exhibition program to being a multi-arts facility demonstrating strong community engagement and broad social impact through participation-based programs, employment opportunities for regional artists and subsidised creative spaces supporting regional arts engagement and development generating cultural tourism and economic development for the region.

Key challenges for NRCG to continue charting this successful path include securing ongoing core funding, adequate skilled staffing matched with services and fit-for-purpose hard and soft infrastructure, maintaining a high quality point of difference to the Regional Galleries located within the immediate geographical area that include Lismore Regional Gallery, Tweed Regional Gallery and Grafton Regional Gallery. Additionally the newest challenge is ensuring operations can remain agile with the ability to pivot and adapt programs in response to the prolonged negative operational impacts of Covid-19.

This plan was developed on evidence based research including ongoing participant and visitor surveys, statistical data and an online community consultation survey. Consultation also included an independently facilitated workshop with key Gallery stakeholders lead by Dr Elizabeth Baker in addition to a direct briefing session with elected Councillors.

The strategic priorities for arts and cultural development within the Ballina Shire outlined in this plan build on the strategic planning actions already contained within Council's Community Strategic Plan 2017 – 2027 (CSP), Our Community : Our Culture, Ballina Cultural Plan 2014 - 2020 and the Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2019 – 2023.

## Why invest in the arts?

The value of arts in our culture and community

Arts and culture help to create outstanding places to live, work and play. They are integral to liveable, thriving places: impacting economic development, tourism, placemaking and education; as well as supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Creative Industries are recognised indicators of innovative economies in the 21st century. They are shown to attract and retain a skilled workforce including young people, enhance local economies, and build entrepreneurship and innovation.\*

Ballina Shire Councils' investment in the arts delivers significant cultural, social and economic returns to the community. These returns include income for artists, promoting inclusion, an active and engaged community with a sense of belonging; and, delivering opportunities for participation, learning and fun.

In this Plan 'culture' is defined as the production, distribution and participation in creativity by the community and visitors, and the reflection and expression of its customs, traditions, heritage and

social character. This is composed of creative endeavors such as visual arts, literature, performing arts and public art.

Northern Rivers Community Gallery (NRCCG) and Ignite Studios social impact programs creatively enrich the lives of residents and visitors and achieve important outcomes beyond 'art for arts sake'; such as improving childrens' literacy skills, or decreasing social isolation for the elderly in the community.

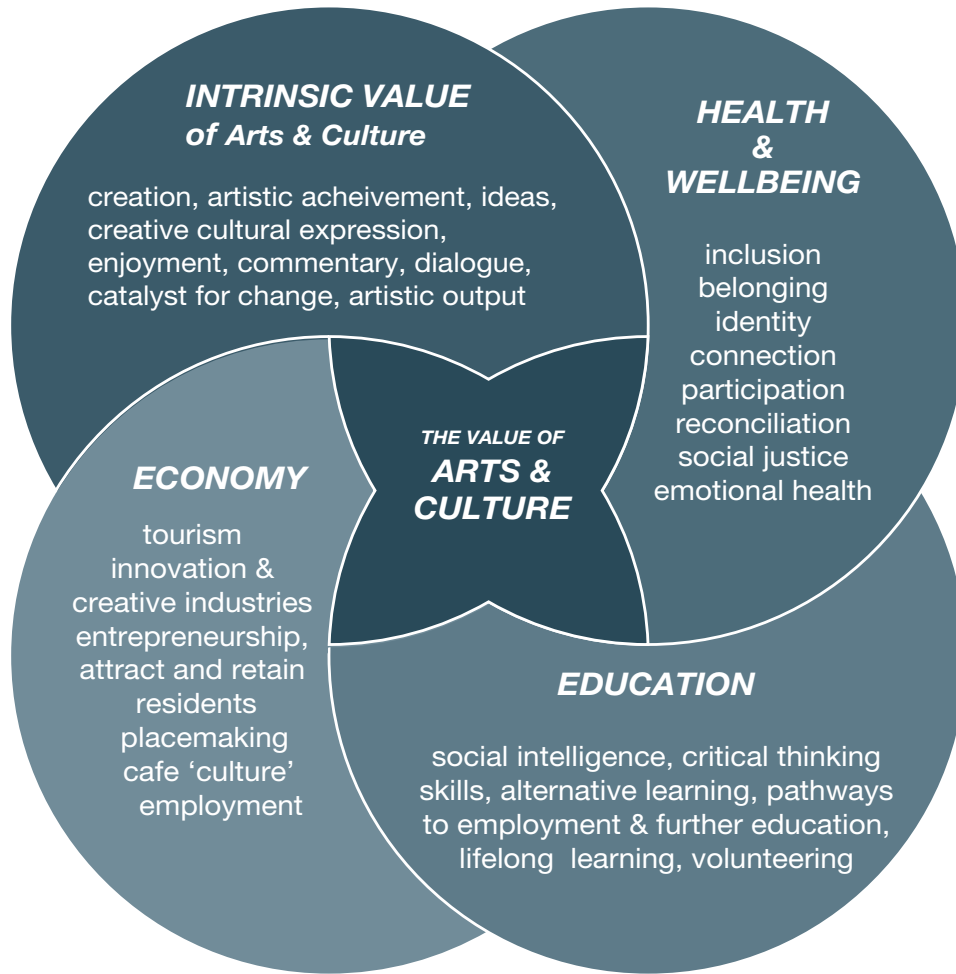
As a regional arts and cultural facility our programs and services support the employment and economic development of local artists and creative industry through gallery sales, employing artists to present workshops and events and provide subsidised spaces to create and collaborate.

The arts offer an alternative approach to connect with young people who are disengaged or struggle with conventional education, as well as promoting skills that are increasingly critical to preparation for work in the 21st century - resilience, problem solving, social intelligence and entrepreneurship.

*“The benefits of culture and the role it plays in supporting population growth, urban development and community wellbeing have been demonstrated internationally.... Forward-thinking governments around the world are making major investments in a diverse range of cultural infrastructure to support the happiness and wellbeing of citizens...The cultural and creative industries are increasingly important to New South Wales’ economy. This trend will continue with a long-term transition away from manufacturing towards a service-based economy.”\**

\*NSW Government Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025 +





98%

of NSW Residents engage with the arts

87%

of NSW Residents think it is very important to have cultural activity in their local area

 $\frac{3}{4}$ Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Australians believe the arts make life richer and more meaningful \*

\$13

billion - the amount Cultural and heritage visitors spent in Australia in 2017, up 53.2% from 2013\*\*

66%

of Australians believe arts have a big or very big impact on their understanding of other people and cultures.\*

6.5%

Creative industry businesses make up 6.5% of all New South Wales businesses\*

***“Tourists making day trips or longer overnight visits to regional towns are more likely to visit their local museum and art gallery than stop at wineries or theme parks”\****

***The Arts are a bigger drawcard for international tourists than wineries, casinos or sports, with international visitors particularly interested in First Nation arts and cultural experience\****

\* (2019/2020 statistics released by the Australia Council)



## Ballina Shire: The Opportunity

A community recognised nationally and internationally for thriving creative industries and exciting arts and cultural opportunities

Ballina township is identified in the NSW Governments' Far North Coast Regional Strategy as a developing major regional centre with forecast 19.6% population growth and demographic changes with approximately 80% of our residents being under the age of 65. The Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy 2015-2035 outlines what needs to be done to accommodate these changes to ensure existing and future residents and visitors continue to enjoy world-class quality of life. The plan identifies arts and creativity as key strengths of the region.

In response to the increase in density and changing social landscape, Council will plan and develop arts and cultural infrastructure to ensure a variety of cultural experiences and opportunities are available to all residents, including growing numbers of young people and families.

Arts and culture are shown to deliver diverse social and economic benefits. Building local creative vibrancy will capitalise on Ballina's existing lifestyle assets such as its natural environment, year-round mild climate and outdoor lifestyle, central location within the Northern Rivers region, riverside and beach side CBD location.

*Councils' role is to build creative capacity and support spaces where arts and cultural activity can flourish.*

Supporting the cultural and creative life of the community may involve resources or infrastructure that: enable creative practice; encourage artistic interventions in public spaces; activate open spaces; amplify voices in community and support community groups,

through exhibitions and programs; reduce regulatory barriers for cultural activity; or, by addressing the scarcity of affordable space for artists and their creative endeavours.

Draft actions outlined in this plan are informed by local, state and national government, arts industry policy context (Appendix 1), arts industry trends, benchmarking and research, and direct stakeholder engagement through participation and online survey data (Appendix 2).

Future planning should set out a coordinated approach for the development of cultural infrastructure and resources across the shire, ensuring a cost effective, strategic approach to arts and cultural development.



image: (left) Five Writers Road Trip Event - Byron Writers Festival Partner program; (above) Bright Sparks - Deck Art Kids Workshop

## NRCG & Ignite Studios: Our Background

NRCG programs foster and ignite creativity, and build community connection through the arts.

The Northern Rivers Community Gallery (NRCG) is a significant regional cultural hub in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, encompassing local government areas of Ballina, Byron Bay, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed.

NRCG exhibitions and programs promote critical thinking, creative exploration and social inclusion; and connect makers and audiences with creative opportunity.

NRCG programs act as a catalyst for artists and community to explore ideas and forge collaborative exchanges.

***As a community gallery NRCG is guided by a unique artistic mantra based on the principles of access, equity and participation – delivering arts many benefits through engagement, activity and learning.***

The gallery features four exhibition spaces and presents a range of professional, multi-arts and cultural programs. Projects are initiated

by local and national artists, arts professionals and cultural and community groups. Uniquely, the NRCG provides opportunities for emerging and established artists nationally to hire galleries and exhibit and sell their work under subsidised arrangements, as well as presenting touring exhibitions and in-house curated programs. The gallery charges low-cost hire fees and commissions on all sales and is manned by a dedicated team of volunteers and staff.

In 2007 Ballina Shire Council established the Northern Rivers Community Gallery (NRCG) in the historic former Ballina Municipal Council Chambers built in 1927. Adjacent to the gallery in the same building is the popular Ballina Café.

In 2018 NRCG expanded into the heritage-listed, former Ballina Fire station, which reopened as Ignite Studios. Ignite Studios is Ballina's newest multidisciplinary creative space providing dedicated, fit-for-purpose, creative industries spaces for studios, residencies, projects and events. Ignite Studios supports regional arts and cultural development through the provision of subsidised creative industry studio spaces and professional development programs including master classes and the visiting artist program. NRCG's diverse programs

and community initiatives emphasise life-long creative learning for all members of the community.

NRCG's life-long, creative learning programs are shaped by collaboration and conversation; and have grown with community aspirations as they change and evolve. Gallery program highlights include *Bold Sparks Lifelong Learning Program* for aged care residents, the Art and Literacy schools program, and *Bright Sparks* creative school holiday and after-school programs. A diverse range of public programs and funded projects are offered throughout the year for all levels of creative development supporting participation in arts and cultural activities for visitors and the wider community. The Visiting Artist program engages with the unique identity, history and current social, environmental and economic context of the Northern Rivers through social or environmentally-engaged artist collaborations and projects.

Through culturally diverse and accessible programming, NRCG has achieved strong community engagement and exceptional growth in visitation - between 2015 and 2019 visitation has grown from 15,017 in 2015 to 27,616 in 2019.

## NRCG & Ignite Studios: The Opportunity

NRCG programs foster and ignite creativity, and build community connection through the arts.

NRCG has established itself as a leading regional cultural institution, increasing cultural visitation to the shire, securing state funding for expansion into Ignite Studios, consolidating a reputation for professionalism and innovation in program design. There is an opportunity to further consolidate NRCG as the cornerstone of creative infrastructure for arts and cultural activity in the region, a 'must visit' cultural tourism destination with the potential to attract professional arts companies, high quality events and programming to the Shire. Ballina has the potential to be more than just a 'gateway', for locals and tourists.

Future expansion of Ballina Councils' cultural assets, might

include the evolution of NRCG as a contemporary Arts and/or Cultural Centre, Expansion of NRCG on council owned land in the heart of Ballina CBD, across various buildings and open spaces on the existing site, or a new masterplanned site owned by council, to create an active and thriving creative precinct in Ballina, (whilst preserving and ensuring the longevity of the heritage character of the spaces if remaining in the existing site).

NRCG, under an Arts Centre model, as the anchor tenant would attract and collaborate with professional creative businesses and organisations. Creative space hire would generate revenue for the Centre through, venue hire,

commercial leases for other creative industry, third party art events and activities.

Coordinated development of Cultural Infrastructure and cultural expertise within council is in-line with community aspirations (survey) and acknowledges current and future demographic changes.

As the key Council-managed facility for the support of our creative sector, the NRCG and its Creative Action Plan provide a sound policy framework to support the vibrancy and diversity of our inclusive community.



Image: Fantastical Photos with Natalie Grono - Bright Sparks After School Program in Ignite Studios

# Creative Life Long Learning

Northern Rivers Arts Centre social impact programs.



## ***Bold Sparks Lifelong Learning Program***

Bold Sparks Creative Sessions ignite a meaningful connection between mature adults living within the aged care community, and arts and culture. Over 300 local seniors and community members from across six aged care facilities have enjoyed the opportunity for monthly creative engagement and community connection through the program.

With guidance from professional artist mentors, participants are engaged in a dialogue of arts, culture and memory through creative activities and morning tea in the Gallery. Research has shown that art-based therapies support the notion that art can induce both psychological and physiological healing, and aid with the improvement of self-esteem, social engagement and general mobility. We've explored everything from weaving, to creative writing and grief journaling, terrarium building, screen-printing and theatre sports.

We believe all members of our community, regardless of age or mobility, deserve access to dynamic artistic and cultural experiences and opportunities for creative expression.



## ***Arts and Literacy Schools Program***

Run in conjunction with the schools curriculum, this unique program harnessed the potential for the arts to improve literacy outcomes - through artistic discussions, creative writing, and vocabulary enrichment.

1,337 school children from across 21 Northern Rivers schools have engaged creatively with the gallery exhibitions through the program. The program incorporates teacher training, and a series of school based activities prior to visits to the gallery for further learning experiences. A highlight for the children and audiences was to read the childrens responses showcased beside the artwork on exhibition.

- 90% of participating schools visited a museum or gallery less than once in the previous 12 months
- 61 teachers registered for the program
- 80% of participating schools integrated the program with their school curriculum.
- A cross section study by participating schools confirmed a 78% increase in literacy outcomes of students participating in the program (based on NAPLAN grading criteria).



/images: Casino Wake-Up Time and Kuwinjku Women's Group Exhibition



/image: Virtually Impossible, Andrew Christie and Sprung! Integrated Dance Theatre



## Strategic Directions

Four priority areas are identified as Strategic Directions to inform future planning and activities of the NRCG.

### **A Creative Industry Capacity:**

Create spaces and initiatives where arts and cultural activity and creative entrepreneurship can thrive (for emerging and established artists, designers, makers and thinkers)

### **B Arts and Cultural Infrastructure:**

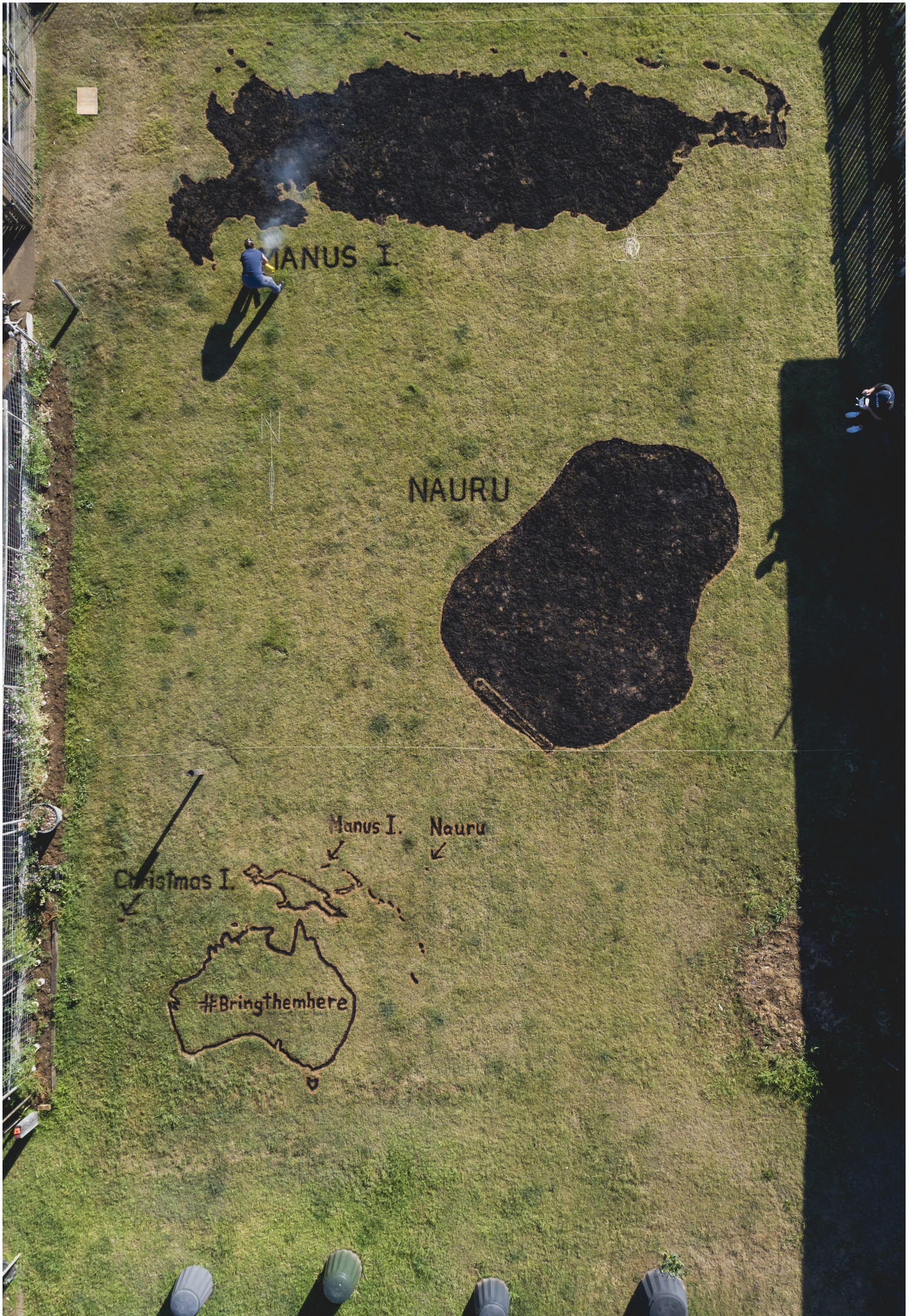
Coordinated support of arts and cultural infrastructure to ensure cost effective future investment in hard and soft infrastructure and resources.

### **C Engage our Audiences:**

Provide opportunities for cross-cultural, multi art form, and intergenerational creative expression for people of all ages, ethnicities and abilities.

### **D Strive for Excellence:**

Develop high quality programs connecting audiences with contemporary arts and cultural experiences.



## A. Creative Industry Capacity

Create spaces and initiatives where arts and cultural activity and creative entrepreneurship can thrive (for emerging and established artists, designers, makers and thinkers)

- Enable creative projects and collaborations between national and local artists, curators and community
- Build creative industries capacity: support spaces and initiatives for emerging and established artists, performers, designers, makers and thinkers

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### A.1 Creative Activation

- A.1.1 Present an annual program of excellence to connect and engage contemporary audiences with arts and cultural experiences in the Ballina Shire.
- A.1.2 Provide subsidised opportunities, exhibitions, work spaces and event venues through NRCCG and Ignite Studios.
- A.1.3 Manage Ignite studios artist-in-residence program, artist projects and community events and experiences.
- A.1.4 Promote Ballina as a Creative destination locally and nationally to generate cultural tourism, revenue and creative industry jobs in the Ballina Shire.

#### A.2 Creative People & Enterprise

- A.2.1 Foster a community of interest around the gallery and Ignite Studios for professional artists and creative industry to connect, network and collaborate.
- A.2.2 Provide subsidised creative spaces to support creative innovation, enterprise and retail opportunities.
- A.2.3 Advocate and support partnerships with local and national arts sector and/or private enterprise to enable professional development opportunities for local creative practitioners.



Images: (top bottom right) Hiromi Tango Collaborative Community Art Workshop at Ignite Studios (Splendour in the Grass Arts program)  
(bottom left) Sprung!! Integrated Dance Theatre - Live performance - Ignite Studios

## B. Arts and Cultural Infrastructure

Coordinated support of arts and cultural infrastructure to ensure cost effective future investment in hard and soft infrastructure and resources

- Cost effective, evidenced based investment in arts and cultural Infrastructure
- Build capacity and infrastructure of NRCG as a cultural hub and integrated creative precinct connecting the broader Northern Rivers region and future co-location of arts and cultural services and activities.

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### B.1 Support for Arts and Cultural Infrastructure

- B.1.1 Support the development of an integrated strategic approach to arts and cultural infrastructure planning to ensure evidenced based investment in arts and cultural infrastructure in the Ballina Shire.
- B.1.2 Support an organisational approach that encourages cultural and creative industries activity.
- B.1.3 Improve industry specific soft infrastructure to better support unique operational requirements of Gallery and Ignite Studios.

#### B.2. Evolution, rebranding and restructure of the NRCG that encapsulates a multi-arts facility model.

- B.2.1 Review and rebrand the NRCG to better represent its evolution into a multi-arts facility ensuring appropriate resource management now and into the future.
- B.2.2 Improve existing outdoor spaces and amenity on the NRCG/Ignite Studios sites.
- B.2.3 Advocate for the development of an integrated Creative Precinct within the Ballina CBD.



Images: Schools Arts and Literacy Program in the Gallery, Cabbage Tree Island Public School visit.

## C. Engage our Audiences:

Provide opportunities for cross-cultural, multi art form, and intergenerational creative experiences for people of all ages, ethnicities and abilities

- Promote equity and access to arts and culture
- Deliver positive social impact through arts and cultural programs
- Nurture creative futures for young people
- Support lifelong learning through arts education and participatory arts experiences

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### C.1. Design and deliver accessible, participatory arts and cultural programs for diverse audiences.

- C.1.1 Resource and deliver dynamic Lifelong Learning programs that engage the whole community in meaningful arts and cultural experience.
- C.1.2 Deliver participatory creative projects that engage audiences with arts and culture in new and unexpected ways.
- C.1.3 Support audience engagement with Aboriginal arts and culture through Lifelong Learning Programs and projects.
- C.1.4 Broaden promotion of NRCG programs and events to the broader community, visitors and stakeholders through our marketing plan.

#### C.2 Support volunteering, creative opportunity and pathways to employment.

- C.2.1 Develop and deliver regular in-house learning programs for Gallery volunteers on visitor experience, arts management and art appreciation.
- C.2.2 Support local young peoples' creative futures'.
- C.2.3 Partner with regional professional arts organisations to develop/facilitate accessible community partner programs.



Image: Virtually Impossible performance - Sprung!! Integrated Dance Theatre + Andrew Christie ©NRCG



## D. Strive for Excellence

Develop high quality programs connecting audiences with contemporary arts and cultural experiences of excellence

- Contribute to the conversation defining arts and culture in Australia
- Tell our stories, and universal stories. Celebrate local distinctiveness - the people, environment and history
- Recognise diversity, inspire cultural understanding, connection, belonging, and challenge prejudice
- Support artistic excellence, ideas and creation
- Develop, produce and collaborate through strategic partnerships to encourage innovation and distinctiveness across all programming

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### D.1 Implement a strategic curatorial approach across creative events, exhibitions, projects and programming.

- D.1.1 Resource and deliver an ambitious annual program and public programs through NRCG maintaining a competitive edge in securing grant funding through innovation, contemporary approaches and curatorial best practice.
- D.1.2 Attract cultural visitation to the Ballina Shire through high quality events, programs and other creative industries projects (including screen, performing and visual arts, culture and heritage).
- D.1.3 Incorporate new media technologies across visitor experience, exhibition and program content.

#### D.2. Collaborate and develop strategic partnerships

- D.2.1 Explore and initiate partnerships across all sectors including community, business, health, education, environment and government.
- D. 2.2 Collaborate and partner with artists and arts organisations to deliver community engaged arts programs, special curated projects and a National Art Prize.
- D.2.3 Work with Aboriginal artists and groups to present contemporary and traditional cultural expression, programs and events.



*Re-experiencing Waves, Visiting Artist UUendy Lau*



## Implementation and resourcing

Achieving the objectives of each of the four strategic directions set out in this plan will require adequate resourcing and staffing of the NRCG and Ignite studios.

There are five key operational function areas which are integral to NRCG's management framework:

- **Marketing and Promotion** : Raise the profile of NRCG, develop Ballina Shire's creative identity and generate economic activity through increasing cultural tourism.
- **Administration** : Optimise productivity ensuring administrative functions are matched with streamlined systems and procedures and appropriate levels of staffing for desired service delivery.
- **Facility Management** : Cost effective investment in fit-for-purpose hard and soft infrastructure and manage co-tenancy agreements to benefit the core programming of NRCG and enable opportunities for multiple revenue streams.
- **Volunteer Management** : Provide meaningful connection for community to participate in the arts and enable career pathways.
- **Financial accounting** : Manage financial resourcing efficiently and responsibly to ensure sustainable and manageable return on investment for the community.

In order to continue improvement of organisational performance – Council needs to ensure the NRCG is supported by a strong management framework which includes appropriate resourcing and effective systems and processes to enable staff to deliver against strategic objectives and key services and functions.

Immediate priorities for NRCG are to consolidate economic sustainability by securing increased concurrent local, state and federal funding, and ensure creative programming and gallery operations are sufficiently resourced. A key challenge being short term and inconsistent funding cycles impact on retaining skilled staff and forward planning to appropriately fulfil community demand for creative experiences within the Ballina Shire. Opportunities exist to expand participation based programming and strategically promote the Gallery to attract cultural tourism and maximise income generating activities.

Priority areas and actions to implement and resource the strategic objectives of this plan are as follows:

### Improve Operational Sustainability

- Secure ongoing funding to:
  - ◊ Address resource limitations and ensure gallery staffing levels support desired levels of service;
  - ◊ secure and retain specialist skilled staff; and
  - ◊ support the NRCG core program.
- Identify and implement various non-government revenue streams to support operational sustainability.

- Capture and quantify gallery data and use results to inform future development of policy, programs, infrastructure and report on performance.
- Maintain a strong volunteer program to support operations, programming and opportunities for community.
- Ensure future Gallery Café Lease agreement renewals/amendments are mutually advantageous to NRCG operations, budgets, facility management and enable event revenue for the Gallery.
- Promote and educate the community on sustainability through projects and information sharing and the procurement process.

### Communicate and Collaborate

- Collaborate and partner with a wide range of organisations nationally to build strong, formal partnerships, and a network of support for the future.

### Act as Custodian

- Maintain the building infrastructure, ensuring any development or maintenance is undertaken in consideration of the heritage status of the properties.

### Advocate

- Work with council and state and federal arts organisations to advocate for a coordinated and cost-effective investment in arts and cultural infrastructure (hard and soft) across the region.

## APPENDIX 1: Where this plan fits?



### NATIONAL & STATE POLICY CONTEXT

#### NSW GOVERNMENT CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

NRCG's four strategic priorities outlined in this plan align with those identified in the NSW Government Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025.

1. Cultural infrastructure supports strong communities and economies in NSW
2. Access to space for community participation in culture
3. Cultural infrastructure for a collaborative and thriving cultural sector
4. Creating impact through partnerships and capacity building

The NSW Government Cultural Infrastructure goals are to:

- Integrate cultural infrastructure planning with land use, infrastructure and transport planning
- Improve cultural infrastructure and precinct design to create better cultural spaces.
- Understand and maximise social and economic benefits of cultural infrastructure.

Specific State arts funding priorities for the North Coast include:

- Improve suitability of existing infrastructure
- Support consolidation and growth of regional creative industries
- Integrate cultural infrastructure planning within the North Coast Regional City Action Plans

Ambitions for NSW are also outlined in the *NSW State Infrastructure Strategy, 2018 – 2038 Restart NSW/ Rebuilding NSW Strategy* to deliver “world-class institutions to maintain strong cultural and sporting sectors and support the visitor economy”.

This plan is supported and informed by broad planning and research including:

- International Arts Tourism: Connecting Cultures (Australia Council 2018)
- Arts NSW Aboriginal Arts & Cultural protocols 2011
- NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework
- The Economic Value of Arts, Screen and Culture to NSW (KPMG for Create NSW 2018)
- Culture, Value and Place 2018: A Report for NSW Department of Planning and Environment

## APPENDIX 1: Where this plan fits?

### LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

#### BALLINA SHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

At a local level, Councils in NSW are required to prepare and implement a Community Strategic Plan (CSP). These CSPs are developed to encourage councils, the community and other organisations to work together to plan for the future in an efficient and collaborative manner.

Ballina Shire Council's CSP was endorsed in 2017 and is called "Our Community: Our Future". It sets out the Council's overall plan for the development of the shire, and the communities within it. The NRCG Strategic Plan is intended to sit below our CSP and act as a blueprint for arts and cultural development through

NRCG in the shire. As the key Council-managed facility for the support of our creative sector, the NRCG and its Creative Action Plan provide a sound policy framework to support the vibrancy and diversity of our community, and the changing demographics and cultural landscape.

The CSP provides the strategic direction and projected needs of the Ballina Shire and establishes the broad objectives to direct operations within the NRCG over the next five years. The NRCG 'Creative Action Plan' is linked to the following objectives within the CSP.

#### BALLINA SHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (CSP) PRIORITIES

##### CONNECTED COMMUNITY

- CC2.1 Encourage community interaction, volunteering and wellbeing
- CC2.2 Create events and activities that promote interaction and education, as well as a sense of place

- CC2.3 Assist disadvantaged groups within our community

- CC3.1 Provide strategies for older residents to be part of our community

- CC3.2 Provide young people with a range of leisure activities, along with opportunities for personal development

- CC3.3 Support improved health outcomes by providing equitable access to sporting, recreational and community facilities

##### PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

- PP1.1 Promote our area as an attractive place to visit and live

- PP1.2 Provide opportunities for new business

- PP1.3 Encourage diversification and enhance image of the local economy

##### ENGAGED LEADERSHIP

- EL1.1 Facilitate and develop strong relationships and partnerships with the community

- EL1.2 Involve our community in the planning and decision making processes of Council

- EL1.3 Actively advocate community issues to other levels of government

- EL2 Council's finances and assets are well managed

- EL3 We are all valued customers

##### HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

- HE2 We use our resources wisely

- HE3 Our built environment blends with the natural environment

# APPENDIX 1: Where this plan fits?

## BALLINA SHIRE CULTURAL PLAN

The Ballina Shire Cultural Plan is a flexible plan which lays out a foundation upon which to grow the cultural activity in our community over time. Importantly, it is a framework which identifies the key areas our community has said it values most to guide the future development of cultural activity in the Shire. It therefore contains the following elements to assist Council, and the community, in directing the growth of cultural activity throughout our Shire.

The plan identifies five cultural activity objectives which embrace the key areas the community value most, and wish to improve or develop:

1. **Sense of Place:** Foster cultural activity that promotes the heritage, stories and unique features that are the Ballina Shire.
2. **Aboriginal Culture:** With the Shire's Aboriginal community, promote understanding of local Aboriginal identity, culture and heritage.
3. **Great Outdoors:** Care for, or enhance, our natural and other outdoor environments which underpin our special lifestyle.
4. **Art Smart:** Encourage and support our creative industries to be sustainable and accessible. Cultural Spaces: Better utilise our existing cultural infrastructure, as well as respond to changing needs, to hold and encourage cultural activity.
5. **Family Fun:** Shape our cultural image and infrastructure to reflect a family friendly place for all of us to live and others to visit.

The Creative Action Plan is linked to a number of 'Opportunities' identified within the 5 cultural activity objectives as follows:

### SENSE OF PLACE

- Encourage community based activities and events that engage with our history and local collections/museums, as well as artists and performers to tell these stories.
- Foster or strengthen community or regional partnerships to hold cultural activity reinforcing our sense of place.

### ABORIGINAL CULTURE

- Continue to showcase local and regional Aboriginal artists at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.

- Form ongoing partnerships with the Shire's Aboriginal groups to develop and fund new cultural activity to promote their identity, culture and heritage.

### GREAT OUTDOORS

- Celebrate our environment through cultural activity held in the Shire – including through exhibitions, public art and family based events.

### ART SMART

- Continue to support and develop a diverse and engaged creative community via a distinctly local program of exhibitions, public programs and events at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.
- Continue to activate the Northern Rivers Community Gallery as a central hub for creative activity in the Shire and region.
- Utilise grant funds to complement regional-based programming at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.
- Explore new ways to promote creative activity in the Shire including adopting creative activity to assist in achieving Council's Community Strategic Plan goals.

### CULTURAL SPACES

- Support outdoor community events that are family friendly.
- Develop the Northern Rivers Community Gallery as a hub for diverse cultural activity that complements exhibitions – including live music and other performance, education and professional development programs and family based cultural activity.

### FAMILY FUN

- Work with children, young people, parents and grandparents to plan for cultural activity and infrastructure that is inclusive of all families and family members – including age, gender, disability and cultural groupings.
- Encourage community events that are family friendly and integrate creative family activities into existing community events.
- Promote our environment and cultural activity to residents and visitors in age and culturally appropriate ways and to reflect the whole Shire community.

## APPENDIX 2: Community Aspirations

In 2018 NRCG asked community members to share their vision for arts and culture in Ballina Shire. The results show an aspirational creative community who value the contribution of arts and culture in their lives, yet feel existing investment in arts and cultural infrastructure is below expectations.

Respondents agree or strongly agree

- 98%

It is important that arts and cultural activity happens in the Ballina Shire

- 92%

Arts and cultural activity helps me appreciate the shire's unique characteristics and its people

- 69%

Arts and cultural activity is an important factor in deciding where I will live

- 93%

Arts and culture contributes to my life and the social cohesion and wellbeing of our community

However only 18% agreed or strongly agreed

The range of arts and culture activities and events in the Ballina Shire is adequate and offers diversity.

Consultation with 22 Gallery stakeholders consisting of key arts and culture organisations, education providers – primary, secondary and tertiary, community art groups, Indigenous organisations, disability arts groups, aged care providers and independent artists reflected the wider community aspirations in addition to partnering with NRCG to strengthen arts and cultural activities in the Ballina Shire.

Respondents agree or strongly agree

- 95%

Co-locating Arts and Culture infrastructure to create a multi-disciplinary art centre facility is beneficial for community, tourism, access and participation

- 95% agree or strongly agree

Expansion of NRCG facilities to include dedicated workshop spaces, artist studios, creative project space and a visiting artist-in-residence space will benefit the artistic and social life of Ballina Shire

Both community and Stakeholder survey respondents identified a desire for a broader range of arts and cultural facilities to be available within the Ballina Shire. creative workshop and subsidised artist studios were the two top priorities within both respondent groups.



Image: (left) Picturing the Past - Creative Youth Heritage exhibition in the Gallery; (right) Monkey Monkey, Shake Shake live performance in Ignite Studios



**nrcg** | Northern Rivers Community Gallery  
& Ignite Studios

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Northern Rivers Community Gallery is an initiative of Ballina Shire Council

