

ART GALLERY
OF BALLARAT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Art Gallery of Ballarat acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and gives respect to the Elders – past and present – and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Gallery acknowledges the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which the Gallery stands. The Gallery recognises and shares the value and importance of collecting, conserving and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Established in 1884 the Art Gallery of Ballarat is not only the oldest but is also the most engaging regional gallery in Australia. Located in the heart of Ballarat, the Gallery is beloved by visitors and residents alike. A dynamic education and community engagement program grounds the organisation in the daily life of the city.

This Strategic Plan 2023/24–2028/29 presents an opportunity for the Gallery to move forward and grow after the last plan which focused on consolidating systems and processes as well as audience research. I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of the Gallery team in achieving much of the last plan despite the impact of COVID-19.

A commitment to audience experience brings the Gallery back to its origins – the belief that art can powerfully impact and enrich lives and is for everyone. The Gallery exists to deliver this experience to the people of Ballarat, Victoria and beyond. To do so, the Gallery needs to continue to deliver original and meaningful programs that engage diverse audiences and respond to the growing community of Ballarat.

Our nationally significant Collection is one of the top Australian art collections in the country and is the largest and most valuable in regional Australia. It is borrowed widely for important exhibitions in state and national cultural organisations. We need to ensure that the highly respected Collection is managed and stored to international museum standards, and we also need to ensure that the beautiful historic Gallery building is fit for purpose – these are two of the core actions of this plan.

The Gallery is a flagship City of Ballarat cultural organisation and is a leader in the national public gallery network. This is a plan for the whole Gallery. It outlines a unified focus for the staff and volunteers, Board, Foundation and Association.

– **Cr Des Hudson OAM**

'I don't want to be an artist, I want to experience what an artist experiences; it helps in other areas of my life, it helps me make sense of it all.'

– *Gallery visitor*

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PART ONE: OUR CONTEXT



OUR PURPOSE, MISSION AND VALUES

* OUR PURPOSE

To be the heart of our creative city. A place for all people to look beyond everyday life; to be inspired and engaged by art.

By ‘inspired’, we mean:

- ↳ Exposed to new perspectives and narratives.
- ↳ Moved from innovative personal responses to larger themes of place and identity.
- ↳ Supported and validated by exposure to familiar and shared experiences, elevated through artistic expression.

By ‘engaged’, we mean:

- ↳ Connected to shared cultural identity and enriched as a result.
- ↳ Actively contributing to the events and activities of the Gallery.
- ↳ Advocating the value of the arts, personally and in the community.

* OUR MISSION

To reflect the story of Ballarat; past, present and future. To champion audience experience and the accessibility of art.

By 'audience experience', we mean:

- ↘ The intersection of the physical environment, the programmed content and the Gallery identity expressed through interaction with visitors.
- ↘ The interaction with potential visitors outside the bounds of the physical Gallery.
- ↘ The contribution of the Gallery's activities to the collective cultural identity of Ballarat.

By 'accessibility', we mean:

- ↘ Literal physical access for those with additional physical needs or living with disability.
- ↘ Access through decoding semiotic and contextual cues and content of historical work.
- ↘ Access through the representation of diverse cultural and linguistic identities and lived experiences.
- ↘ Access by removing perceived barriers to engaging with 'high art', or a Gallery context.

* OUR VALUES

↘ Bold

We stand boldly and live by our Mission, Vision and Purpose. We are courageous and compassionate.

↘ Proud

We are well respected with a strong history in the community. We are professional, ethical and strive for excellence.

↘ Vibrant

Our programming is dynamic. We participate, collaborate and engage with artists.

↘ Thriving

We grow and adapt to the needs of our audience. We are creative, agile and innovative.

↘ Curious

We are curious, involving new audiences from different cultures and backgrounds.



INTRODUCTION

As Australia's oldest regional gallery, we boast one of Australia's most significant collections of over 11,000 artworks and are one the largest regional galleries. We operate within a rich ecology of stakeholders: the City of Ballarat, dedicated Gallery Board, Foundation and Association, the passionate staff, volunteers, artists, and supporters who all share our vision for a vibrant Ballarat that is enriched by our unique creative and cultural identity and assets.

Over the last few years, we have undertaken significant work to build audiences and improve access, deepen relationships and partnerships and build the foundations for sustainable growth.

Our trajectory was set in motion by a dynamic and transformative 2019–2022 Strategic Plan which sought to transition the Gallery into a 21st century gallery – one that is audience-focused and firmly embedded in the local creative economy. Underlying this Strategy were our Vision, Mission, Purpose and Values, which were conceived as part of the Strategy's development. They have held true and continue to guide and ground our work and remain as relevant as ever.

We have championed the Gallery's original motto 'Not for self but for all' to place audiences at the heart of everything we do. We have continued to showcase the Collection in bold ways through groundbreaking exhibitions that comprise original research and highlight our unique ability to be a place where old meets new.

Despite our successes, our beloved, historic building presents accessibility and maintenance challenges, hindering care for our Collection and program enhancement.

To fulfill our original Vision, Mission and Purpose, we must address barriers impacting the way we operate and leverage the momentum and opportunities we have built over the last strategic plan. We must continue to adapt, to listen, and to respond to audience demand and community needs. This includes diverse programs and exhibitions, attracting new audiences, and extending our social and economic impact beyond our walls.

Just as the period between 2019 and 2022 has brought significant challenges and change, we must be prepared for a 2028 that will bring more change and opportunities. The Strategic Goals and Actions outlined in this Strategy will guide the Art Gallery of Ballarat in navigating these opportunities and challenges. They form the next chapter of an ambitious agenda established in our 2019–2022 Strategy. One that will firmly place the Gallery as Australia's leading regional gallery; that puts audiences at the heart of everything that we do; and plays a leading role in telling unique stories, through exceptional, engaging, and accessible art experiences.



**‘Art is a piece of
someone’s soul.
It gives you
happiness and
directs your life in
the right direction...
Thank you.’** –Gallery visitor

OUR STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

STRATEGIC VISION

To be Australia's leading regional Gallery.

By 'leading,' we mean:

- ↘ Engaged with industry best practice.
- ↘ Respected and highly regarded by peers, government and funders.
- ↘ Accessible and relevant to our audience.

By 'regional' we mean:

- ↘ Reflecting Ballarat and surrounding areas' stories, people, culture, place.
- ↘ Bringing the best of the world to Ballarat.
- ↘ A key player in cultural tourism.
- ↘ Embedded in, and embraced by, the local community.

GOALS

The Vision will be achieved through initiatives governed by the following Strategic Goals:



OUR RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Our recent community survey has shown that local residents and visitors continue to embrace and regularly return to enjoy our programs and exhibitions.

In 2022, we delivered over 30 exhibitions, featuring over 300 artists, and 120 public programs and events. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic we attracted, engaged and inspired nearly 200,000 visitors a year including over 11,000 school students. Additionally, the Gallery delivered numerous professional development and research programs and activities to help foster the cultural knowledge and understanding of Ballarat's (and Australia's) unique and diverse artistic history and contemporary identity.

Audiences, particularly those from outside Ballarat, have increased as borders have opened following the COVID-19 restrictions. Over the first six months of 2023 we have seen an 84% growth in visitation compared to the same period in 2022. Our national profile has been enhanced by an active outward loan program to major exhibitions across the country highlighting the strength and reputation of the Collection.

A Collection Development Plan was adopted to strategically guide acquisitions with a particular focus on aligning exhibitions and acquisitions. Important acquisitions were made for the Collection by way of purchases through the Colin Hicks Caldwell Bequest, the Hilton and Joe White Bequests and the Art Gallery of Ballarat Foundation, as well as donations made by individuals and through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

The Gallery initiated an audience research project that was externally funded by a philanthropic foundation. The research covered current audiences and their motivation as well as looking at potential audiences and why they are not currently visiting the Gallery.

In 2019 we engaged a consultant to undertake a Governance Review of the Art Gallery of Ballarat and provide advice and a recommendation for an alternate structure that better aligned the objectives of the Gallery entities. A new Board was appointed in August 2022.

KEY STATISTICS

Over the previous Strategic Plan period (2019–2022), including 263 days of closure due to COVID-19 restrictions, we achieved the following outcomes

- | | |
|---|--|
| 415,147
Visitors onsite | 450+
Artists exhibited including over 150 local artists |
| 80+
Exhibitions | 20
Changes of the permanent Collection displays |
| 326,399
Visitors online | 12,380
New Instagram followers |
| 6,477
New Facebook followers | 48,000+
Students engaged |
| 522
Acquisitions to the Collection including 290 donations | 306
Artworks loaned over 33 individual loans to galleries nationally and internationally |
| 400+
Public programs and events including talks, concerts and workshops | 20
Paintings conserved through the Adopt an Artwork program by public donation |
| 4
National Design Awards | 4500
Artworks digitised |

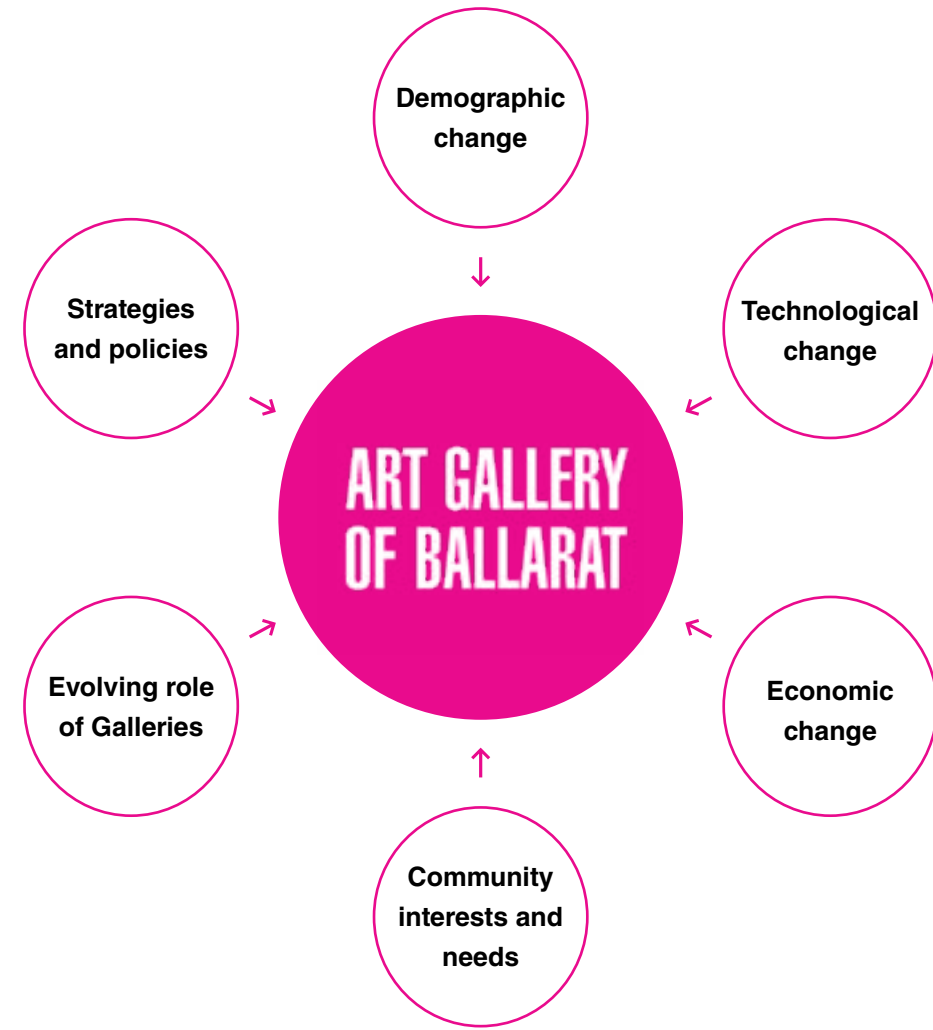
'We have brought students here every term for years now. I just wanted to say that I'm personally loving the new direction and feel. The Art Gallery is more vibrant and relevant.'
–Gallery visitor and educator



FORCES FOR CHANGE

Ballarat's changing landscape urges us to evolve, adapting to new demographics, technologies, audience interests and economic tides.

The diagram below illustrates the multitude of external forces that prompt us to adapt and in doing so, position ourselves to be a future-focussed Gallery; a vibrant hub for all and a source of civic pride.





STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

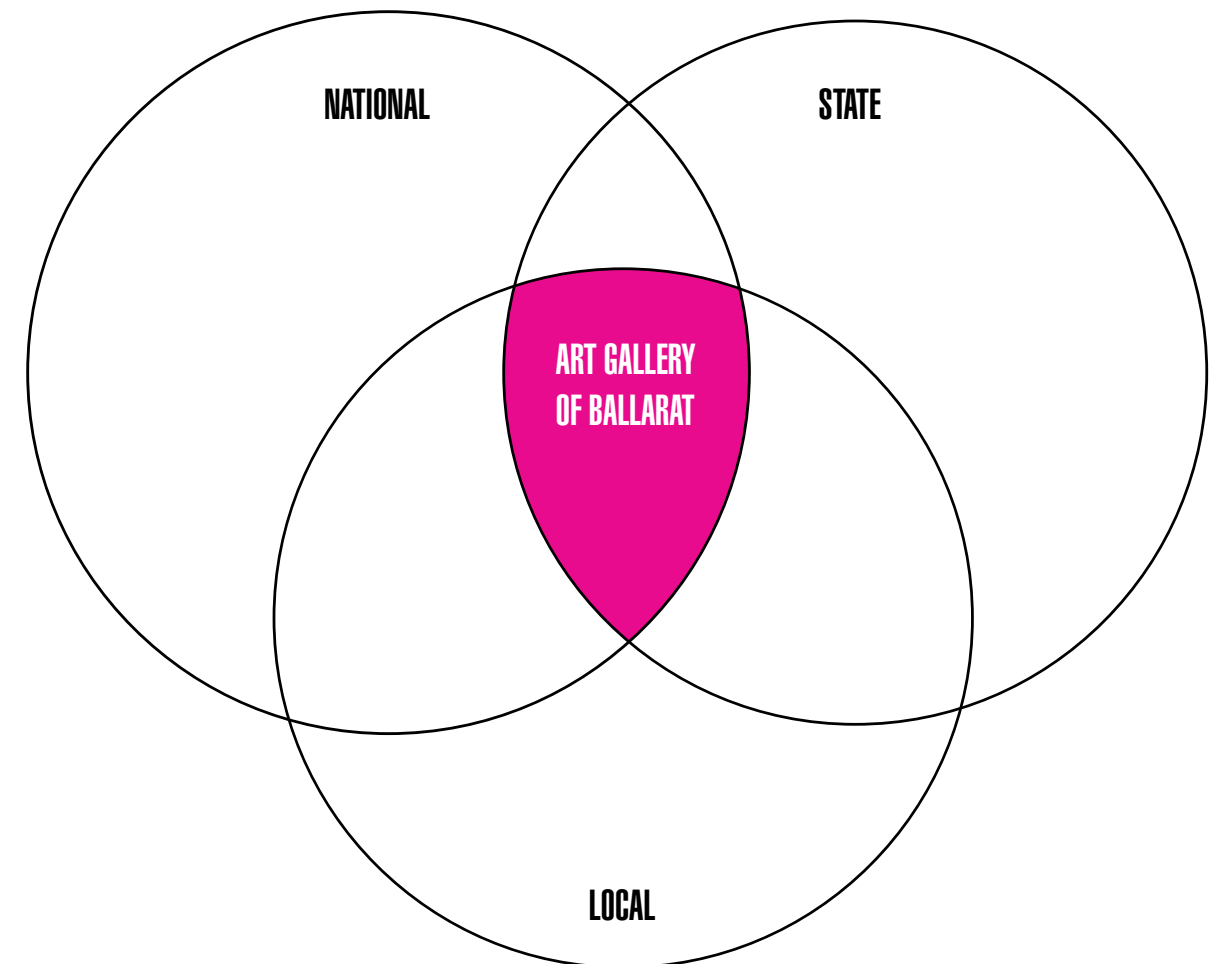
In shaping the future of the Art Gallery of Ballarat, we must consider the Local, State and Federal policy landscape we operate in. Federal policies lend a national perspective, state policies reflect regional nuances, and local policies address immediate community needs. Through alignment, we can ensure a cohesive approach at various levels, maximising collective resources to make a bigger impact.

* NATIONAL POLICIES

- Revive: Australia's New Cultural Policy
- First People's Roadmap

* STATE POLICIES

- Creative State 2025 Strategy
- Experience Victoria 2033



* LOCAL POLICIES

- Ballarat Community Vision 2021–2031
- Council Plan 2021–2025
- Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021–2031
- Ballarat Creative City Strategy 2019
- City of Ballarat Traveller Experience Plan 2021–2030
- Visitor Economy Strategy 2021–2024
- City of Ballarat Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–2025

Refer to Appendix A – Policy Alignment for more details

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Ballarat is Victoria's largest inland city: leading the way as a sustainable, innovative and inclusive community.

Since 2018, the Ballarat community has, and continues to transform: more diverse backgrounds, more languages spoken – we are a united community of varied and unique stories.

117,240

Estimated population by 2023

144,108

Forecast population by 2036

1.4%

Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

9.5%

Population born overseas

60+

Suburbs and localities

51%

Aged 40 years and under

23.1%

Aged 60 years or more

28.0%

Lone person households

16.0%

Households with no internet access

6.2%

Require assistance due to a severe disability

14.5%

School starters at risk or vulnerable on language / cognitive development



* DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

There are notable increases in different cultural backgrounds, with a significant percentage of growth in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and overseas-born populations.

* LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

There is an increase in non-English speakers at home and a slight rise in those who are non-English speakers, along with a more diverse recent overseas arrival population.

* YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHICS

22.9% of the Ballarat population is aged 0 to 17 years old.

Key takeaway:

These shifts point to new diversity needs that must be met, with a focus on inclusion and the representation of various community groups.

* LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

More than 10% of Ballarat residents identify as LGBTQIA+.

* DISABILITY NEED

The number of people needing assistance has increased by 33% (or 1.45% of the overall population) highlighting a need to ensure accessibility and support for this group.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

As technology rapidly advances in Ballarat, the world of artistic expression and consumption is undergoing a significant transformation. Key aspects of this transformation include changing consumption patterns, modes of artistic expression and online accessibility.

* SHIFT IN CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

Internet penetration has been rising in Ballarat, prompting a shift towards more art and information consumed online.

* EVOLUTION OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

As technology becomes more intertwined in art, the Gallery will need to adapt and curate spaces for these innovative mediums.

* ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Digital solutions offer opportunities for increased accessibility and digital inclusion. Hybrid delivery models, combining live and digital events, ensure that art remains accessible to all community members.

* FOSTERING DIGITAL PROFICIENCY

There is a shortage of digital capabilities and skills in the regional arts sector. By fostering digital capacity via learning and professional development, the Gallery could not only cater to online event demands but upskill regional artists.

Key takeaway:

These technological advancements prompt the Gallery to adapt to how art is created, presented and consumed.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE

The economy of Ballarat has shifted since the 2018 strategy. There are both areas of growth and areas of significant disadvantage, prompting us to consider our role in supporting the local economy and creative industries, ensuring equitable access to all members of the community, regardless of their economic circumstances.

Notably, the City's population is characterised by the disparity in socio-economic status (SES), with some suburbs having relatively high levels of education, employment, and income, while others are among the 2.5% most disadvantaged areas in the state – with low levels of employment, literacy, income and wellbeing.

Galleries drive cultural tourism. In 2018, Australians took 12.3 million day trips and 13.4 million overnight trips with arts activities (Domestic Arts Tourism Report, Australia Council for the Arts 2020). Regional Australia is a hotspot for arts engagement, leading to longer stays and higher spending. Ballarat saw the most arts activity in day trips from 2015–18, making it a top choice for arts tourism.

* CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural tourism serves as a significant driver of growth for Ballarat's local economy, drawing visitors with its rich artistic heritage and contemporary offerings.

* CREATIVE INDUSTRIES EMPLOYMENT AND IMPACT

The arts and culture sector in Ballarat has grown rapidly since 2016. It's representation of all full and part-time employment in Ballarat is growing faster than many other sectors (from 1.6% of all jobs to 2.4% in 2021). As the creative industry expands, it is becoming a critical employment area. In 2022, Ballarat's creative industries achieved over \$291 million in gross revenue.

* COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

The rising cost of living has also resulted in many people, particularly those from Gen Z and Millennial demographics, facing increased financial barriers which has been found to be impacting participation in arts events across Australia.







EVOLVING ROLE OF REGIONAL GALLERIES

In the past five years, regional galleries across Australia have changed substantially. They offer a welcoming environment in which art and artmaking reflect the cultural experiences of the region and the nation.

Local, intrastate and international audiences want art that is engaging and inspiring. They want to learn about the city and see new things. They also want art to be in safe places and buildings that work for everyone.

Regional councils, state, and federal governments recognise galleries' social and economic value, investing in upgrades, expanded storage and enhanced services for communities and visitors.

- In November 2021, Shepparton Art Museum launched a new \$50 million building designed to house and display its collection of over 4000 artworks.
- Opened in 2022, the \$60.5 million HOTA on the Gold Coast provides 2,000m² of exhibition space to house the City Collection and major local and international touring exhibitions. A main exhibition gallery sits alongside a six-storey tower that contains three permanent collection spaces and a roof top bar. A children's gallery, artist workspace, café, retail and 800m² of collection storage cater to gallery and community needs.
- Bendigo Art Gallery is in the design phase of a new \$48 million adjunct to their building to accommodate storage of their collection and increase the international exhibition program.
- The in-progress \$40 million expansion of Newcastle Art Gallery will provide a significant cultural tourism opportunity for NSW. By more than doubling the size of the Gallery and delivering a suite of modern facilities, the expansion will provide greater access to its nationally significant collection and a wider range of prominent exhibitions. Staffing is increasing by at least 10 positions as a result of the redevelopment.
- In 2015, the Gippsland Art Gallery completed a major redevelopment that dramatically enhanced visitor experience. The collection was completely digitised during the process.
- Geelong Gallery has developed a compelling Business Case for a redeveloped gallery at the cost of \$120 million.

Key takeaway:

In recent times the Art Gallery of Ballarat's capital investment has been focused on essential works and maintenance. In order to capitalise on harnessing the growth in regional gallery visitation, new capital investment needs to focus on improvements to enhance the visitor experience and set up the Gallery for future success.

CHANGING COMMUNITY INTERESTS AND NEEDS

As part of the development of this Strategic Plan, we invited the community's input via an online survey MySay Ballarat and on-site forums. We sought the community's feedback on what the Gallery does well, what could be improved and what would most excite them about attending their Gallery.

This is what we heard:

✎ We need to build our profile and connections

We provide a breadth of exhibitions and programs that are designed to excite, invite discovery, to challenge notions and enrich our understanding about ourselves and the world. However, not everyone knows about us and engages in what we do.

✎ We need to champion First Nations voices

We showcase art by local and national First Nations artists, and the community want to see more First Nations artists represented in our exhibitions and programs. However, we don't have any First Nations people on our staff or Board which is a barrier towards the representation and self-determination of First Peoples.

✎ We need to be more representative of Ballarat's diversity

Ballarat is a diverse place and becoming increasingly so. Members of the community surveyed expressed that we can do more to make sure everyone feels welcome at the Gallery, especially for persons with a disability, families and carers with young people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and those who are financially vulnerable.

✎ We need to deepen our engagement between local artists and the community

There is a vibrant local community of artists and organisations in Ballarat and the community expressed a strong desire to be able to engage more deeply with local artists and their work, through artist talks, workshops and classes.

✎ We need to further enhance our role in improving Ballarat's liveability and reputation as a major cultural tourism destination

The community and stakeholders expressed a desire to build on our strengths as a civic asset that fosters community engagement and wellbeing and further leverage our role in stimulating the visitor economy through one-of-a-kind experiences.



PART TWO: OUR VISION



OUR STRATEGIC VISION AND ACTIONS

This Strategic Plan outlines our ambitious agenda to firmly establish the Art Gallery of Ballarat as Australia's leading regional gallery.

Our agenda is defined by the following Strategic Goals and Actions focussed on enhancing our cultural, social and economic impact. It embraces innovative approaches to not only strengthen what we offer within our walls but extend our reach across Ballarat and beyond.

It builds on the significant momentum and transformation set into motion over the preceding strategic plan period to engage and grow our audiences and deepen our relationships with diverse communities.

It is grounded in our core Mission, Purpose and Values, while responding to our contemporary context, our strengths and limitations, and the changing needs and aspirations our community, audiences and key stakeholders.

'Exactly what we need in Ballarat, bold and brave.'
– Gallery visitor



1 EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION

We will leverage our significant Collection and develop and promote inspiring and moving experiences that reflect artists and communities and that interrogate history.

A majority (84%) of community respondents are highly interested in learning about Ballarat's cultural history. We support our community's desire for cultural engagement through our significant Collection which continuously expands in line with our strategic vision. However, our limited capacity has led to repurposing gallery spaces for storage, impacting the Collection's access, care and curation.

Additionally, we are committed to showcasing art by local First Nations artists, ensuring we are respectful, inclusive and support the self-determination of First Peoples. We will embed First Nations perspectives into our exhibitions, education and outreach programs, celebrating their role in our rich cultural fabric.

Finally, the community expressed a desire to see a broader range of artists represented. We will continue nurturing Ballarat's artists and organisations, collaborating with artists and the Collection to convey diverse views about the past, present and future through unique exhibitions.

'An ingenious way to tell the story of the Art Gallery of Ballarat! Congratulations on a decolonised approach to celebrating the collection, for articulating the story of the Gallery so creatively and showcasing the ecology of artists in the Ballarat region. Exciting!' – Gallery visitor



ACTIONS

1. Support local creative talent

We will foster local creative talent through exhibition and engagement opportunities, including a regular local artist group exhibition.

2. Bring Ballarat to the world and the world to Ballarat

We will develop an artist in residence program, strengthen international artist engagement, and establish strategic loan partnerships nationally and internationally.

3. Present exhibitions examining overlooked artists and re-examining art histories

We will continue presenting exhibitions that challenge traditional art narratives and engage the public with innovative approaches. We will align exhibitions and programs with Ballarat's UNESCO status as a Creative City for Craft and Folk Art.

4. First Nations collaboration

We will collaborate with First Nations leaders, communities and artists to embed their perspectives in exhibitions, education and outreach programs.

5. Enhance Collections storage

We will advocate and plan for a new world class offsite open collection store with education and conservation spaces to showcase and house our nationally significant Collection and be a regional hub for other public gallery collections.

6. Care for and celebrate our Collection

We will reclaim gallery spaces used for storage to showcase our unique Collection. We will improve and expand exhibition spaces for greater visibility of the Collection, flexibility and multimedia display. We will address structural limitations hindering our capacity to host expansive exhibitions.

7. Preserve the Collection

We will digitise the Collection for safety, documentation and online access. We will address legacy archiving, documentation and management issues. We will develop a 10-year conservation plan to address significant, high value and at-risk works.

8. Assess Council collections

We will document and streamline the City of Ballarat's Collection through consolidating collections management across Council, making more of our cultural assets available.

9. Fill Collection gaps

We will continue to acquire significant artworks, commission artists and address gaps through the Collection Development Plan. We will promote the Gallery nationally by lending artworks to significant exhibitions and enriching research on the Collection.

10. Promote the Collection more broadly

We will explore partner display opportunities and expand our publishing and merchandise offers. We will seek opportunities to activate Council's complementary spaces and facilities, extending our presence and experiences beyond our walls.

11. Explore options for the Lindsay sitting room

We will investigate ways to interpret and optimise the presentation of the historic Lindsay sitting room to ensure it maintains significance and relevance.

2 | EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION

We will support and empower our communities through social cohesion, inclusion, identity and pride; and sharing knowledge, skills, and opportunities with the community, students, teachers and artists.

From community feedback, it is clear the majority of visitors (74%) feel welcome at the Gallery. However, there is room for improvement in promoting and delivering services to meet the needs of diverse audiences, specifically persons with disabilities, young families, financially vulnerable and culturally diverse groups.

To encourage life-long learning we will diversify programming to engage our community's differing interests and values. We will ensure that learning is accessible and engaging for people from all walks and stages of life.

Community surveyed feel the Gallery can play a key role social cohesion and inclusion. Many wanted to see more diverse art (57.8%), partnerships with local groups (55.2%) and inclusive workshops for all abilities, ages, and cultures (44.8%).

Furthermore, our learning and professional development programs are highly valued, with 84% of participants rating them as good or excellent. The community expressed desire for more opportunities to engage more deeply with artists and their work, through artist talks, workshops and classes.

ACTIONS

12. Expand community engagement

We will partner with local community and cultural groups to extend art and programs beyond the Gallery, reaching a wider audience. We will develop an annual outreach program to participate in local events, festivals and community groups.

13. Tailor programs for diverse audiences

We will design and market exhibitions and programs to represent Ballarat's diverse communities particularly targeting persons with a disability, families or carers with young people and those who are financially vulnerable and culturally diverse. We will develop and implement an Audience Engagement Plan including Gallery Membership optimisation to retain and expand memberships.

14. Develop an Art and Wellbeing plan

We will develop programs addressing community wellbeing needs. We will align with evidence-based approaches to leverage art and creativity to support positive psychological, physiological, social and behavioural outcomes.

15. Strengthen education and research partnerships

We will continue to expand our school education program through Government and philanthropic partnerships, ensuring all Ballarat students visit the Gallery through their school years. We will develop and implement an Education Plan, including expanding our education space to cater to the demand for educational and public programming.

16. Partner with tertiary institutions

We will work with education partners like the Australian Catholic University, University of Melbourne and Australian National University to develop or support research, tertiary education programs (e.g., internships and scholarships) that align with the Gallery's objectives.

17. Review the volunteer and Guides programs

We will ensure volunteers and Guides programs meet industry standards, audience expectations and are accessible for broad community participation.

18. Support youth career pathways and training

We will work to strengthen training and career pathways in the creative sector and associated industries. We will develop and deliver a Youth Ambassadors Program to provide young locals exposure to potential career pathways and training in the Creative Sector, offering school-level work experience placements and tertiary-level internship opportunities.





**‘This really is one of
the great
Australian galleries.’**

**It does what it is
meant to – engages
and educates! Not
all galleries do that.’**

–Gallery visitor and educator

3 | EXTENDED REACH AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

We will develop new audiences and attract visitors to 'discover' unique stories and culture through art. We will value and build our community of supporters and deepen their engagement with the Gallery.

The Gallery's positive impact is clear – it makes a significant contribution to Ballarat's vibrancy and liveability. Our strengths lie in enhancing tourism and the local economy, inspiring visitors, and preserving our culture. We will extend our economic impact, working with local industry to leverage drawcard experiences that enhance our visitor economy.

'Our entire school recently attended an incredibly educational and thoroughly engaging Indigenous Education session at the Art Gallery of Ballarat. Thank you!' – Gallery visitor and educator

Our community survey revealed that 50% of respondents are eager for more drawcard exhibitions – 'hero' exhibitions to establish Ballarat as a destination city.

Additionally, while we provide a breadth of exhibitions and programs that cater to all audiences, we know that not everyone knows about us and are engaged in what we do. We need to shout about what we are doing and invest in strategic marketing campaigns.

ACTIONS

19. Maintain and develop new audiences

We will promote and strengthen awareness of the Gallery's unique offering both locally and nationally to increase our share of the cultural tourism market. We will utilise strategic marketing campaigns with tourism and industry partners to expand and attract new audiences, putting the Gallery front-of-mind for residents and increase awareness of the Gallery's diverse offering.

20. Deliver more 'drawcard' experiences

We will forge partnerships to develop and deliver drawcard experiences, including securing international signature exhibitions and commission one-of-a-kind programs. Strategic marketing will boost visitation by locals and visitors enhancing the city and Gallery's reputation and igniting deeper connections with our audience.

21. Strengthen local industry partnerships

We will strengthen our partnerships with local industry providers to identify and tailor engaging visitor experiences that encourage discovery and longer stays in Ballarat. This collaborative approach will help enhance and amplify our collective impact and reach.

22. Leverage Council's resources

We will tap into the City of Ballarat's breadth of civic and cultural spaces and expertise. We will collaborate with Council experts in tourism, economic development, marketing and community engagement to understand evolving community and industry trends and form partnerships to inform and promote our work.

23. Understand our audiences

We will implement ongoing audience research and develop an Audience Engagement and Marketing Plan to ensure we meet audience needs as well as attract new audiences.



4 | PREPARE THE GALLERY FOR THE FUTURE

As we embark on our next plan, we **acknowledge the essential factors that will propel us towards realising our strategic goals and prepare the Gallery for the future.**

These factors encompass the vital components of our capacity and capabilities that are pre-requisites to ensuring seamless operations, efficient processes, and an impactful role in the lives of the artists, communities, and partners we collaborate with.

As part of this transformation, we will ensure the highest standards of corporate governance, innovation, technology, people and ethics. We will take action to support responsible social, economic and environmental outcomes.

'I adore coming to the Gallery – wonderful always to see the familiar faces at front desk, Gallery shop, the cafe and the art of course. Feels like home.' – Gallery visitor



ACTIONS

24. Develop a Strategic Masterplan

We will develop a Strategic Masterplan to address heritage building issues such as lighting, HVAC, security, storage, wall linings, plant and access meet international museum standards, future growth and diverse audience needs.

25. Advocate for Camp Street creative precinct

We will work with partners within Council and community to support development of the Camp Street precinct as a creative destination in which the Gallery is the heart.

26. Engage an Assistant Director - Curatorial

We will establish a new position to drive curatorial efforts, maximising value of the Gallery's Collection for the community through exhibitions, loans, public programs, acquisitions, philanthropy and partnerships.

27. Implement a workforce plan

We will execute a Workforce Plan, including the hiring of a First Nations Curator as per the City of Ballarat Reconciliation Action Plan, a full-time Marketing position, and a Development position.

28. Improve our environmental sustainability

We will explore opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint and position the Gallery to be eco-friendly, supporting our long-term viability and legacy for generations to come.

29. Enhance the visitor and user experience

We will create the best possible visitor experience including enhanced onsite retail, dining and commercial experiences to diversify income. This will include upgrading audio-visual capabilities, event spaces and promoting our spectacular building for venue hire and community uses.

30. Establish strategic funding partnerships

We will work with and strengthen relationships with existing partners and forge new ones to secure multilateral and multi-year investments to support bold projects that position Ballarat as a regional arts and culture hub, enhancing social and economic benefits.

31. Provide innovative and accessible spaces

We will enhance accessibility and inclusivity of our heritage building. We will address urgent improvements that respond to 19th century design constraints while responding to visitor feedback.

32. Measure and communicate our value

We will reframe the Gallery's role and connection to the community. We will improve communication and regularly share impact stories to challenge the idea that we are a Gallery not just about the 'fine arts', but one that the entire community embraces as their very own.

33. Build stronger funding partnerships

We will build effective partnerships and alliances with donors, philanthropists and funding bodies to realise and amplify the benefits we can deliver for Ballarat's liveability, economy and wellbeing. We will develop a culture of philanthropy through annual giving campaigns, bequest programs and regular giving.

PART THREE: OUR PATH AHEAD



DELIVERING OUR ACTIONS

KEY MILESTONES AND MEASURES

The following table charts our proposed journey over the next six years, defining when we will deliver the Actions outlined in this Plan and the measures we will use to assess and communicate our impact.



↘ Action	↘ Measure	Year 1 23/24	Year 2 24/25	Year 3 25/26	Year 4 26/27	Year 5 27/28	Year 6 28/29
Experience and interpretation							
Support local creative talent	Increased exhibition opportunities.			*		*	
Bring Ballarat to the world and the world to Ballarat	Artist in residence program established		*				
Present exhibitions examining overlooked artists and re-examining art histories	# of exhibitions		*		*		*
First Nations collaboration	# of collaborations	*	*	*	*	*	*
Enhance Collections storage	Feasibility study and Business case completed	*					
Care for and celebrate our Collection	Galleries returned to exhibition spaces		*				
Preserve the Collection	Conservation plan completed		*	*	*	*	*
	# of works digitised						
Assess Council collections	Integration on Vernon database			*			

↘ Action	↘ Measure	Year 1 23/24	Year 2 24/25	Year 3 25/26	Year 4 26/27	Year 5 27/28	Year 6 28/29
Fill Collection gaps	# and value of acquisitions	*	*	*	*	*	*
Promote the Collection more broadly	# of artworks on loan	*	*	*	*	*	*
Explore options for the Lindsay sitting room	Interpretation and future plan developed		*				
Empowerment and inclusion							
Expand community engagement	# of outreach activities	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tailor programs for diverse audiences	# of new programs	*	*	*	*	*	*
Develop an Art and Wellbeing Plan	Plan completed and programs underway		*	*	*	*	*
Strengthen education and research partnerships	# of education visits	*	*	*	*	*	*
Partner with tertiary institutions	# of partnerships	*	*	*	*	*	*
Review the volunteer and Guides programs	New program in place		*				
Support youth career pathways and training	Youth Ambassador program developed			*			

↘ Action	↘ Measure	Year 1 23/24	Year 2 24/25	Year 3 25/26	Year 4 26/27	Year 5 27/28	Year 6 28/29
Extended reach and economic impact							
Maintain and develop new audiences	Visitation growth	*	*	*	*	*	*
Deliver more ‘drawcard’ experiences	International exhibitions		*		*		*
Strengthen local industry partnerships	# of collaborations	*	*	*	*	*	*
Leverage Council’s resources	Establish regular meetings within Council	*	*	*	*	*	*
Understand our audiences	Annual audience research	*	*	*	*	*	*
Prepare the Gallery for the future							
Develop a Strategic Masterplan	Masterplan and implementation plan developed	*	*				
Advocate for Camp Street Creative Precinct	Leverage opportunities for Gallery needs and uses		*				
Engage an Assistant Director - Curatorial	Position employed		*				
Implement a workforce plan	Workforce plan actioned				*	*	*

↘ Action	↘ Measure	Year 1 23/24	Year 2 24/25	Year 3 25/26	Year 4 26/27	Year 5 27/28	Year 6 28/29
Improve our environmental sustainability	Reduction in electricity consumption		*	*	*	*	*
Streamline our governance and systems	MoU’s in place		*				
Enhance the visitor and user experience	Business cases submitted	*	*	*	*	*	*
Establish strategic funding partnerships	Business case for 10 year exhibition funding		*				
Provide innovative and accessible spaces	Accessibility audit undertaken		*				
Measure and communicate our value	Social impact report undertaken		*				
Build stronger funding partnerships	Fundraising campaigns in place		*	*	*	*	*

OUR LONG-TERM GROWTH

We stand at a pivotal juncture in our journey towards excellence and cultural impact. Over the past decade, we have seen an astounding 69% increase in the size of the Collection, a surge in visitation from 40,000 to over 200,000 visitors per annum and a stronger reputation. However, our operational capacity has struggled to keep pace and we face critical deficiencies across various facets of our organisation, from inadequate staffing to outdated infrastructure. These structural challenges require interventions that extend beyond this Strategy's six-year window or require additional strategic investment over the long-term.



KEY ISSUES

Staffing, systems and resources

✦ Staffing constraints

Visitation increased from 40,000 to 200,000 annually in 15 years, but our staffing of 16 full-time-equivalents (FTEs) remains insufficient. In comparison, similar sized regional galleries and populations with smaller collections have up to 10 additional FTEs.

✦ Outdated governance structures

While much work has been undertaken to address legacy governance structures, additional work is required to ensure that the Gallery meets best practice for its future.

✦ Marketing and promotion

There is limited operational funding to support marketing, communications, digital marketing and public relations. While the Gallery is producing a large number of exhibitions and programs, we can do more to promote to potential visitors what we are doing.



Exhibition spaces and Collection management

✎ Lack of storage

Inadequate storage space has meant two exhibition galleries have been reappropriated for Collection storage, reducing opportunities for public engagement with our Collection. Additionally, the limited onsite general storage space has resulted in reliance on offsite storage leading to inefficiencies and OH&S risks.

✎ Backlog of Collection and digitisation and documentation

A massive backlog of Collection digitisation and documentation is not only an operational risk but impedes research and interpretation.

✎ Dated and constrained assets and facilities

The Gallery building and adjoining Foundation-owned properties face legacy maintenance and capacity issues including an ageing HVAC system that is unreliable and not compliant with international environmental standards, limiting inward loans; outdated systems such as alarm and security systems, inefficient lighting systems; a loading bay that cannot accommodate large scale trucks for delivery of international touring exhibitions; and outdated exhibition and programming spaces that are unable to present large-scale drawcard exhibitions.



Public, education and staff amenities

✎ Lack of education spaces

Gallery's limited and unsuitable education space impedes the ability to meet the demand from schools.

✎ Facilities for events and third-party hires

A lack of a dedicated public program space limits our ability to host activities and events and necessitates urgent AV infrastructure upgrades.

✎ Cafe and retail capabilities and experience

The café and retail spaces are not fit for purpose to meet visitor demand and support higher quality and diverse experiences.

✎ Staff amenities

Staff areas need to be reviewed to ensure that there is room for growth and that staff can work in safe and pleasant spaces.

✎ Provision of public amenities

Toilets and public spaces are not suitable for the large number of visitors coming through the building and there is no gathering space for school groups.

Interventions

To ensure that the Gallery not only maintains its current standing but continues to grow and evolve over the long-term, we urgently require investments and interventions in several key areas:

➤ Staffing

Strengthen our capacity by recruiting additional positions in curatorial, First Nations, marketing, and development.

➤ Long-term investment

Our operational funding needs to be flexible to allow for planning of exhibitions and activities across several financial years.

➤ Collection storage, conservation and digitisation

A Business Case is required to address our urgent need for international standard Collection storage, conservation, and digitisation to safely store and manage the Collection.

➤ Cafe and retail capabilities and experience

The café and retail spaces require storage and new fit-outs, while the café's kitchen needs enlargement to cater to demand.

➤ Customer, ticketing and venue management

The CRM needs to be upgraded to provide adequate stewardship of donors and supporters. We need to upgrade our ticketing and venue management systems.

➤ Exhibition spaces

The two exhibition galleries currently closed for Collection storage need to be returned to active Gallery spaces to display more of the Collection.

➤ Implementation of a Masterplan for the Gallery

The need to undertake a Masterplan has been identified as a key action for this Plan. However, this will need to be supported by adequate funding to bring the Masterplan's vision to life, to address legacy maintenance issues, improve the capacity and quality of visitor and staffing amenities and support opportunities for future growth and service improvement.

Overcoming these critical barriers will be a central focus for the Gallery staff, Board and Foundation. However, we cannot do so in isolation. To truly succeed, we invite and urge the active participation and support of our Council, valued industry partners, generous donors and the vibrant community we serve.

An important first step for us will be the development of an Implementation Plan, outlining how we will, alongside our Council, community and industry partners, harness the collective power needed to surmount these challenges and propel the Gallery towards realising our transformative vision over the long-term.



APPENDIX

KEY POLICY ALIGNMENTS

Local alignment

↘ Relevant policies	↘ Key areas of alignment
City of Ballarat Community Vision 2021–2031 The Vision reflects the community's aspiration for the future of Ballarat: a city that leads in sustainable living, with easy access to daily needs; fosters inclusivity, diversity and innovation; while balancing heritage preservation with a robust, modern local economy.	Key Vision themes: • A well-planned and interconnected city • A healthy, connected and inclusive city • A diverse and agile economy.
Council Plan 2021–2025 The Plan outlines the Council's strategic direction and objectives and the initiatives to be delivered over the next four years to achieve the Community Vision.	Goals: 1. An environmentally sustainable future 2. A healthy, connected and inclusive community 3. A city that fosters sustainable growth 4. A city that conserves and enhances our natural and built assets 5. A strong and innovative economy and city 6. A council that provides leadership and advocates for its community
City of Ballarat Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–2025 The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) aims to promote better outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the areas where Council has influence.	• Pillar 2: Respect • Pillar 4: Truth Telling
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2031 The Plan describes initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of the Ballarat community over the next 10 years.	• Strategic Focus 2: Priority groups • Strategic Focus 3: Liveability Domains

↘ Relevant policies	↘ Key areas of alignment
Ballarat Creative City Strategy 2019 The Strategy underscores the City’s dedication to fostering community participation, nurturing artistic careers and showcasing Ballarat’s unique spirit.	Catapults: 1. Visible creativity – always something happening 2. Improving access, sustaining creative industry professionals 3. Sustainable funding and investment 4. New audiences, participants and markets 5. Unleash the influencers, thinkers and doers 6. Ground-breaking institutions and cultural offerings
City of Ballarat Traveller Experience Plan 2021–2030 This Plan aims to enhance Ballarat's distinct appeal, fostering equity, capitalise on the strong visiting friends and family market segment, and elevate the city's reputation as an alluring place to reside	• Priority 3: Focus on product development and innovation • Priority 5: Facilitate community tourism
Visitor Economy Strategy 2021–2024 The Strategy aims to build Ballarat's visitor economy and increase Ballarat's market share of regional Victorian visitation.	• Priority 1.1: Build and innovate experiences that deliver on the key pillars • Priority 2.1: Work with private and public sector to attract investment and prepare business cases for infrastructure projects that support the Traveller Experience Plan 2021–2030 • Priority 2.4: Continue to implement the Ballarat Creative Precinct Master Plan • Priority 3: Focus on priority audiences and leveraging Visitor Friends and Relatives • Priority 4: Invest in community as hosts, partners, and experience entrepreneurs • Priority 5: Create impact and resilience through capacity building and partnerships

State alignment

↘ Relevant policies	↘ Key areas of alignment
Creative State 2025 Strategy Creative State aims to address longstanding and new challenges facing Victoria’s creative industries and to grow their contribution to our society, economy and culture.	Our Strategy aligns with the Creative State 2025 Strategy through our dedication to supporting the self-determination of First Nations artists, job and learning opportunities in the creative industries, developing innovative experiences, providing equitable access for regional communities to quality art, and developing regional new audiences.
Experience Victoria 2033 Experience Victoria 2033 is a roadmap to help government, businesses and leaders of Victoria's tourism sector plan for growth by stimulating private and public investment.	We will help progress the following Experience Victoria’s key pillars – First Peoples-led experiences, Wellness, Arts and Culture and Food and Drink.

Federal alignment

↘ Relevant policies	↘ Key areas of alignment
Revive: Australia’s New Cultural Policy The Policy aims to address longstanding and new challenges facing Victoria’s creative industries and to grow their contribution to our society, economy and culture.	Our Gallery's vision aligns with the Federal 'Revive' policy, by emphasising cultural identity, inclusivity, artist centrality, strong infrastructure and audience engagement.
First People’s Road Map – Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) AMaGA's First People’s Roadmap aims to enhance Indigenous engagement in the museums and galleries sector.	We are committed to creating a welcoming space for Indigenous peoples so that they feel comfortable entering the Gallery. As colonial institutions, galleries have historically been viewed as oppressive environments by Indigenous people. We align with AMaGA's roadmap through our commitment to building trust and deeper relationships with First Nations people and changing the way we reflect our Indigenous cultures.

