



Our reference:

Temora Shire Council - National Cultural Policy Submission

Temora Shire Council (Council) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the National Cultural Policy.

Temora is a rural local government area with a strong identity shaped by its agricultural base, aviation heritage, and active community life. Council recognises that arts, culture, and heritage are central to community wellbeing, economic resilience, and regional identity. Council is a member of Eastern Riverina Arts and the Country Mayors Association of NSW and supports the submissions on the National Cultural Policy made by these organisations.

This submission reflects Council's commitment under *Our Plan for the Future 2025–2035* to support a connected, inclusive, and resilient community, strengthen local identity and pride, diversify the local economy, and maintain sustainable infrastructure and services.

Under Pillar 1, First Nations First - Council supports practical measures that strengthen First Nations cultural recognition and participation in rural communities, including locally led programs, partnerships with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations, and opportunities for First Nations artists to create and share work in regional areas.

Rural councils operate within a constrained financial environment. Compared to metropolitan councils, they have smaller rate bases, limited revenue growth, rising infrastructure and service delivery costs, and increasing compliance requirements without proportional funding increases. In this context, arts and culture are often delivered as discretionary services and are vulnerable to budget pressures. Without targeted external investment, rural councils will be increasingly forced to reduce cultural programming, defer facility upgrades, and limit support for local creative activity. This has direct impacts on community wellbeing, youth engagement, tourism, and local economic development.

Under Pillar 3, Centrality of the Artist - Council highlights the challenges of building and sustaining a creative workforce in rural areas. Access to training, professional development, mentoring, and career pathways is limited compared to metropolitan centres. Local artists, makers, and performers often need to travel significant distances to participate in opportunities, creating barriers related to cost, time, and transport, alongside limited local capacity to deliver regular programs.

Emerging technologies, including digital platforms and AI, provide opportunities to improve access to training, collaboration, and markets. However, without investment in digital capability, equipment, and skills development, regional communities risk falling further behind. Targeted support is needed to ensure these tools reduce, rather than widen, the gap between metropolitan and regional participation.

To strengthen creative workforce development, Council supports long-term regional funding that enables ongoing creative roles rather than short-term project grants, stronger youth pathways through local programs and partnerships, assistance for volunteer-supported cultural assets, investment in digital capability and connectivity, and expanded touring and partnership models that bring consistent cultural activity to rural communities.

Under Pillar 4, Strong Cultural Infrastructure - Council notes that cultural infrastructure in rural areas extends beyond standalone buildings to include performance spaces, galleries, collections, volunteer-run assets, and community hubs that support participation, heritage, and local identity. Key examples in Temora include the Bundawarrah Centre Cultural Precinct and the Temora Arts Centre. These facilities provide important spaces for exhibitions, performances, workshops, and community events, supporting both local participation and visitor engagement.

These assets are highly valued but costly to maintain and operate. They rely on small operational budgets, volunteer contributions, partnerships, and short-term funding. This creates ongoing pressure in areas such as building maintenance, collection care, accessibility, compliance, utilities, staffing, and succession planning. In a rural setting, where resources must prioritise essential infrastructure and services, there is limited capacity to absorb rising operational costs.

Council supports the view that cultural infrastructure must be understood as both physical and organisational capacity. Buildings alone are not sufficient. Ongoing investment is needed to support programming, skills, partnerships, and audience engagement to ensure facilities remain active and sustainable.

To address these challenges, Council supports long-term, place-based investment rather than short-term funding programs, partnership models that build local capacity and skills, and operational funding alongside capital investment to ensure infrastructure remains viable over time.

Temora Shire Council appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the reviewed National Cultural Policy and looks forward to outcomes that recognise and respond to the needs of rural and regional communities.