



Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework - Implementation

Prepared for the
City of Darebin
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Recommendations for implementation

This report provides recommendations for the implementation of the strategic directions included in the Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework. The mechanisms available to deliver the strategic directions fall into 3 categories:

- Direct capital investment in the arts
- Dedication of council resources
- Policy setting

These would be implemented across different periods impacting the delivery of creative spaces at different times.

 **Long-term strategic planning**
1+ years for planning implementation
5+ years to delivery

 **Project feasibility testing (pre-budget commitment)**
2+ years to delivery

 **Project design (budget needs to be dedicated)**
1-2 years to delivery

 **Project delivery**
1 year to delivery

Direct capital investment

Recommendation 1: Identify highest return for significant investment in the Council-led creation of new making spaces

Stage:  **Project feasibility**

Council regards investment in creative spaces very highly. The recent consideration of whether to purchase the Rivoli Theatre is testament to the potential commitment available. This would take a substantial financial investment. Identifying the best method of creating useable, affordable and secure creative spaces with Council funds is essential. Significant investment could occur via three key opportunities:

a. Reinvigoration of DAEC: This is identified as a Council action in 2018-19. This could involve a moderate to significant investment depending on the preferred use and programming of these spaces.

b. Purchase of an industrial site within one of the identified 7 industrial clusters. Industrial land is significant lower cost than land already rezoned for mixed-use. There are many examples of the adaptive re-use of industrial buildings to establish creative hubs and spaces. This would provide a long-term asset for Council.

c. Partner with an existing land owner in an industrial area through a long-term lease. Council could then fit-out the building and sub-let to creative practitioners (see case study for River Studios).

Action: Undertake financial feasibility study to investigate the preferred investment strategy. This could incorporate a mixed option. This will require preparation of an early master plan for DAEC.

Recommendation 2: Consider allocating 5-10% of existing budgets for infrastructure projects over \$1 million to artists and the creative sector.

Stage: ● **Project delivery**

This is not an additional cost to a project, rather it involves bringing artists in early to be part of the project team and deliver elements such as lighting, furniture and other installations that would have been required as part of the project.

Recommendation 3: Contribute to the Good Music Neighbours program with matched funding to enhance availability of funding for sound attenuation of existing and new live music venues

Stage: ● **Project feasibility**

The state government provides matched funding for venues to upgrade their buildings with greater sound attenuation. To facilitate the impact of this program, Council could initiate its own program or contribute to the state initiative.

Case study: Retro-fit of industrial spaces

Opportunity: Direct capital investment



Image source: <http://www.creativespaces.net.au>

River Studios, West Melbourne

A partnership between the City of Melbourne, Creative Victoria and the owners of the building (Tabilk Nominees) collaborated to transform a warehouse space into an award-winning creative hub that includes 63 artist's studios, with nearly 80 emerging and established artists.

The City of Melbourne leases the 3,000m² building from the private owner to create affordable space. Each party contributed \$100,000 towards the building's refurbishment which was completed over only 16 weeks. The City of Melbourne manages the space and sub-lets spaces to a wide range of artists. Go to <http://www.creativespaces.net.au/managed-space/river-studios-33> for more information

Council resources

Recommendation 4: Establish a role for a dedicated Creative Spaces leader who connects across Council and to creative practitioners

Stage: **Project design**

Supporting the provision of small-scale creative spaces across the whole municipality takes time and energy. A dedicated resource could:

- Provide active resource support to statutory planning with complicated planning applications
- Co-ordinate Darebin's response to new strategic opportunities and challenges
- Maximise partnerships with external organisations for new incubators and education, e.g. LaTrobe University, Melbourne Polytechnic and NCAT
- Work proactively with the private sector to increase the supply of creative spaces
- Coordinate or provide additional support to an expanded 'Active Spaces' program
- Provide advice in meeting building code requirements
- Work with neighbouring councils on a regional approach

This Creative Spaces leadership position could also lead the following four key projects.

4A: Develop design guidelines for the provision of creative spaces in new developments

Stage: **Project delivery**

Developers who are interested or incentivised to provide creative spaces within their developments do not always have the knowledge or connections to the arts industry to understand what is required. Simple and accessible design guidelines can provide advice in regards to size, lighting, sound attenuation or access, for example.

4B: Investigate opportunities to enhance the use of Council's current publications and digital platforms to raise the profile of local creative practitioners

Stage: **Project design**

Many practitioners rely on being able to access their market to support their ongoing practice. Council has a number of publications and platforms that could be used to greater effect to assist in raising the profile of artists to support this outcome.

4C: Investigate opportunities to utilise existing Council community assets, such as libraries, for co-working and expanded arts activities.

Stage:  **Project feasibility**

Council's libraries and community hubs are well distributed across the municipality making them more readily accessible for the broader community. Opportunities for co-working spaces (formalised and informal) would provide the significant number of creative practitioners, who are operating from non-commercial spaces, with a place to work, create and connect.

4D: Prepare educational material to assist creative practitioners in submitting planning permit applications

Stage:  **Project design**

- Prepare 'how-to' FAQ sheets and pro-forma templates for planning permit applications for creative industry uses (explain what uses go where and need a permit) and prioritise understanding of amenity impacts (noise, car parking etc.) which is where key planning decisions are often focused

Policy settings

Recommendation 5: Update Council's overarching planning policy to support the provision of creative spaces

Stage:  **Project design**

Establish clear policy position in the Darebin Planning Scheme to Identify existing and future creative precincts. This could be provided through an update to the Municipal Strategy Statement, or through a new Local Planning Policy.

Recommendation 6: Consider piloting a Zone within the three industrial precincts which have been identified for rezoning through the DELUS report that will support creative industry uses.

Stage:  **Strategic planning**

Rezoning these areas using the typical mixed-use zoning is likely to result in a significant reduction in employment in these spaces and increased pressure on existing creative industries to relocate.

Council is in control of the levers for rezoning. These areas are appropriate for a greater mix of development activity, however this needs to be carefully undertaken to support the continuation of these creative spaces.

Recommendation 7: Ensure strategic planning for the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct incorporates policies that clearly support creative spaces.

Stage:  **Strategic planning**

Establish clear policy objectives for creative and cultural spaces in NURP, including:

- Live-work spaces
- Affordable housing
- Arts Hubs
- Creative spaces across the precinct

Recommendation 8: Develop an Infrastructure Contributions Plan which supports the creation of arts hubs in Reservoir and NURP

Stage:  **Strategic planning**

This has been identified as the most suitable mechanism to support the creation of new arts hubs in Reservoir and NURP. This is because the scale of new development growth is likely to mean that the financial contribution from developments is higher than in established areas.

Funding mechanisms

Funding will need to be considered for each project as appropriate, however the following potential approaches have been considered.

Direct investment

Council revenue would be required to support these projects. This would require the identification of these projects as a Council priority. Reinvigoration of DAEC has already been identified as a Council action for 2018-19.

Infrastructure Contributions Plan

Council is progressing a new development contributions plan. This has been identified as the most suitable mechanism to support the creation of new arts hubs in Reservoir and NURP. This is because the scale of new development growth is likely to mean that the financial contribution from developments is higher than in established areas.

Value-sharing

Opportunities for incentives within planning policy have been identified for NURP and the three pilot industrial precincts.

External funding

Maximise opportunities to partner with the Victorian or Federal governments for funding. Additional opportunities for corporate, government or philanthropic funding can be pursued, for example, partnering with key institutions, such as La Trobe University, or key initiatives such as the Level Rail Crossing Removal Authority.

Self-generated

The aim should be to assist creatives' spaces to be as self-sufficient as possible. An example of Council investment which has enabled this to happen is the River studios in the City of Melbourne.

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Prepared by Hodyl + Co for the City of Darebin

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