

**FOOTSCRAY
COMMUNITY
ARTS**



A Creative Precinct for Melbourne's West

**Enhancing the impact of
Footscray Community Arts**

We acknowledge that we work, live and create on the unceded sovereign lands of the Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation. We offer our respects to the Elders of these traditional lands and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Eel Trap 2019 by Maree Clarke and Mitch Mahoney. Image by Nicole Cleary



We are building a revitalised Footscray Community Arts.

Like you, we are passionate about Melbourne's West continuing to evolve as a great place to live, work and study. We know that inclusive, safe and artistically vibrant spaces are crucial to realising our collective long-term ambitions for the West.

We're proud to be one of Australia's longest running independently operated arts precincts. For 50 years we have enabled social justice through creativity. However, our infrastructure is unable to match the high demand for quality creative expression in the West.

The redevelopment of Footscray Community Arts will ensure we remain an integral cultural precinct servicing the booming Western Metropolitan region and growing cultural tourism demand. Our ambitious plans include a custom-built outdoor arts pavilion, a landmark gallery for the West, and a green destination that connects with the Maribyrnong River.

As a mature precinct-based arts organisation, we understand how to successfully manage the operation of a busy cultural destination. We're ready to scale up to deliver more events, programs, presentations, creative content and community engagement.

We've worked with the best – including Ontoit and Parallel Practice with support from Creative Victoria and Maribyrnong City Council to address major shortfalls in our current infrastructure and formulate a design for the future of creativity in Footscray.

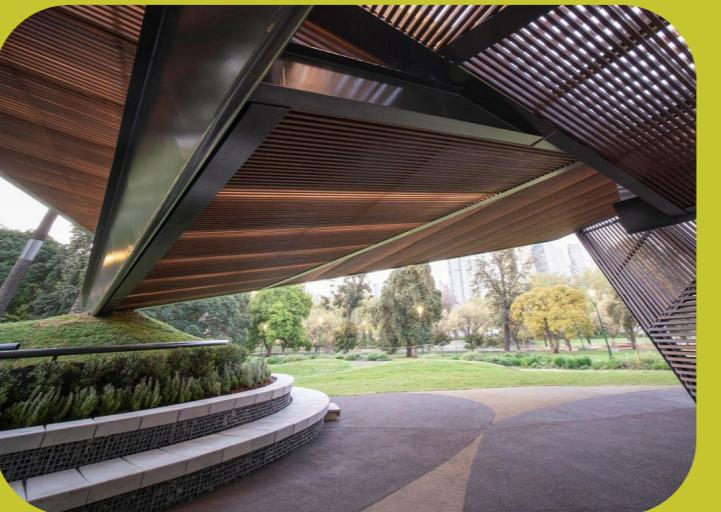
We invite you to support this landmark project in the West.



Arts Pavilion

Converting our much-loved bluestone amphitheatre into an architecturally designed pavilion, quality outdoor experiences will have a home they deserve. You'll see more activities annually – thanks to a flexible design, weather protection and sophisticated technical infrastructure.

Our arts pavilion will be the key platform by which we profile and employ Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse, disability and LGBTQIA+ artists, and ensure the precinct is designed with access and sustainability at its heart.



TOP IMAGE: Footscray Community Arts Pavilion - Concept. Image by ARM Architecture. BOTTOM IMAGE: Inspiration - MPavilion by Carme Pinós. Image by John Gollings.

"The events are family friendly and exciting, and I want to support Footscray Community Arts. We are so lucky to have it."

— Audience Member, 2021

A Landmark Gallery for the West

Hosting impactful exhibitions requires fit-for-purpose infrastructure.

Our gallery expansion will provide space for large-scale and touring exhibitions, climate control to protect culturally significant works, and cutting-edge infrastructure to exhibit ambitious art by our communities.

Your visit to Footscray Community Arts will be transformed. State of the art visitor amenities will support small and intimate experiences, through to large landmark cultural moments. Enhanced disability access, retail, hospitality areas, breakout spaces for schools, and rooftop city views will expand our capability to meet creative and social demands from our community.



LEFT IMAGE: Inspiration - Cai Guo-Qiang at GOMA. BOTTOM IMAGE: Footscray Community Arts' expanded art gallery - Concept. Image by ARM Architecture.





Destination Greenspace

Our precinct on the banks of the Maribyrnong River are a local destination. So we're protecting and improving these to prioritise the wellbeing of our communities in the face of climate change and overdevelopment. We will collaborate with First Nations communities to ensure the site respects and speaks to the ancient cultural significance of the precinct.

Melbourne's western suburbs currently have tree canopy coverage of only 5 to 10 per cent, whereas the rest of Melbourne's suburbs have between 10 and 30 per cent. As population density in the West continues to intensify, access to quality greenspace will be integral to community health.

We're also making it easier to get around Footscray Community Arts – you'll experience greater connectivity and accessibility between buildings. And built-in 'hidden' infrastructure will provide greater flexibility for our outdoor activations year-round, including major festivals.



TOP IMAGE: Footscray Community Arts' riverside lawn. Image by ARM Architecture. IMAGE ABOVE: Image by James Henry. IMAGE RIGHT: Precinct Concept. Image by ARM Architecture.

The Journey

In 2019, we undertook a precinct planning process in partnership with Maribyrnong City Council and Creative Victoria to ensure our aging cultural infrastructure could continue to meet demand from artists, audiences and community. This resulted in a Precinct Plan by Parallel Practice – a comprehensive paper identifying key demographic shifts in the West, and how our infrastructure needs to respond.

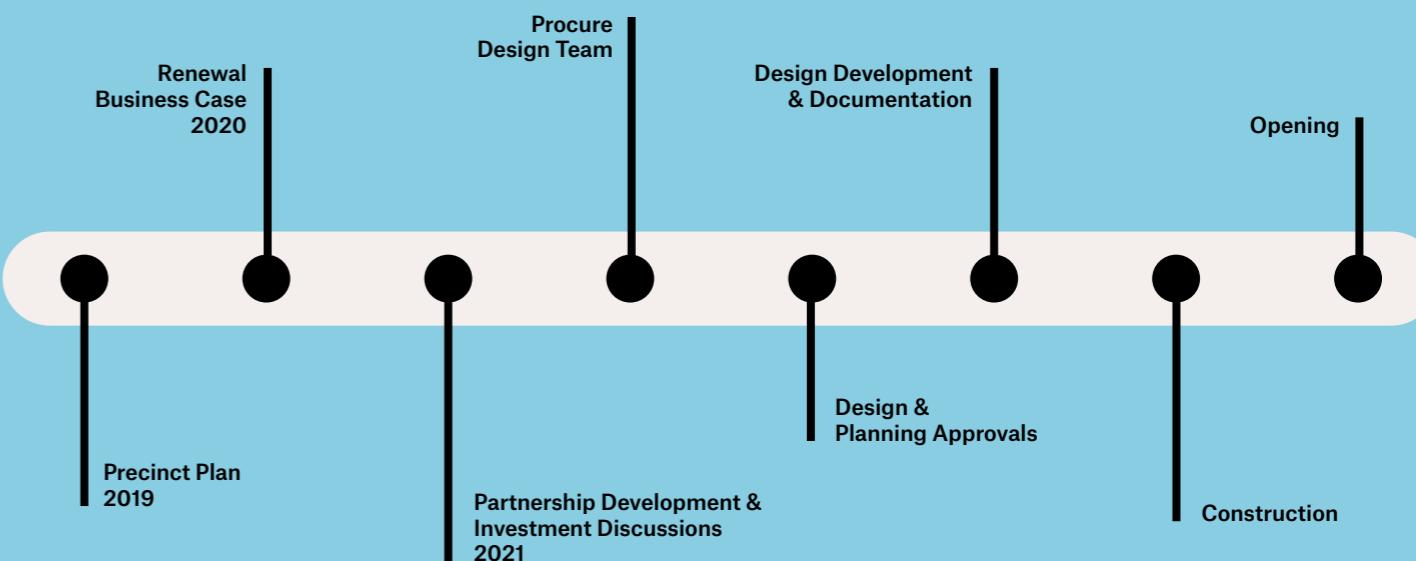
Undertaking investment logic mapping with leading infrastructure advisory practice, Ontoit, identified an arts pavilion, gallery expansion and improved outdoor amenity as the most urgent and impactful recommendations to progress.

"I am proud to represent this centre as their local federal member of parliament, and I am a devoted advocate for the centre's development and growth and the championing of artistic expression in Melbourne's West."

— Tim Watts, Federal Member for Gellibrand

In the meantime, we've been busy actioning more modest Precinct Plan recommendations including an upgrade of the Basement Theatre, refurbishment of Henderson House artist studios, improved wayfinding, and restoration of the iconic Marks / Brook Andrew mural.

Our roadmap outlines the steps we need to take to develop this creative precinct to benefit the West. We are at a stage where we can move forward and commence the design process. To enable this to occur, we are commencing discussions with Government, funding agencies and private partners to support the precinct development.



The Impact



The Need

We know that Footscray's population will grow by 179% and Maribyrnong's by 101% in the next 25 years. We are already experiencing record demand for our precinct and services, and are dedicated to ensuring our communities have access to high-quality, vibrant and culturally safe community spaces.

IMAGE: Current Amphitheatre. Bluestone Sessions 2021. Image by Gianna Rizzo.

Strains on the precinct can only be remedied by investment:

- The site cannot meet current artist and industry demand due to a lack of capacity and cost barriers caused by inadequate facilities. The strain on the precinct is compounded by a lack of other creative space in the West.
- Our current infrastructure was repurposed from decommissioned industrial buildings, and are no longer fit-for-purpose in terms of capacity, accessibility and safety requirements.
- Poor disability access and limited connectivity across the site limit our ability to deliver inclusive, high-quality outcomes.
- Outdated and inferior infrastructure limits commercial opportunities for professional events, limiting future growth potential for local jobs and training pathways.
- Site orientation that faces away from the river and does not acknowledge the environmental significance of the precinct.
- We understand that our role as an accessible precinct for presentation, creative development and cultural tourism will remain vital as the population and housing density around us grows.

"Everything I see here makes me think."

— Audience Member, 2021

Building social capital and liveability for the region.

Future-proofing the arts precinct and ability to meet growing demand.

Establishing a unique cultural destination attraction, that speaks to the legacy, diversity and ambition of the West.

Increased delivery of high-quality year-round arts experiences of scale.

Increased employment pathways in the creative industries for diverse and marginalised communities.

Increased wellbeing and mental health by providing access to culturally safe green space, offsetting rapid urbanisation.

Increased delivery of outdoor experiences, maximising connection to river frontage.

Intersecting Opportunities

Our precinct redevelopment is aligned with key policy and initiatives at every level of government, and represents a considered response offering superior value for investment:

FEDERAL

- The [2021 Federal Infrastructure Plan](#) is focused on reforms and policy recommendations that will deliver better infrastructure outcomes for Australian communities. The plan identifies the need to ensure arts and cultural infrastructure locations reflect population distribution and the geographic centre of fast-growing Cities like Maribyrnong.
- Our programs and aspirations for the precinct align strongly with [Australia Council's Strategic Objectives](#) including ensuring Australians' lives are transformed by arts and creativity, that First Nations culture is cherished and that our arts reflect us.
- As one of the only mainstream arts organisations to register for the [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#), our programs and operation supports increased participation of people with disability, their families and carers in the social, cultural, religious, recreational and sporting life of the community.

STATE

- Footscray has been designated as a [Priority Precinct](#) in recognition of its position as the 'cultural heart of the West' and its status as a key cultural, commercial and educational hub. Footscray Community Arts is already established as a national leader in the arts, and is underpinned by an ambitious strategy to build cultural tourism in the West.
- The [North and West City Deal](#) is a blueprint for the region to respond to the impacts of the pandemic in the immediate and medium-term, and to reform its economy for the future. Development of the Footscray Community Arts Precinct can deliver on its key themes: enhancing liability, health and wellbeing and future economy.
- Our programs and precinct plan resonate strongly with [Creative State 2025](#), the Victorian Government's next four-year creative industries strategy, designed to grow jobs and skills, and secure Victoria's reputation as a global cultural destination and bold creative leader.
- The [Victorian Creative Neighbourhoods Report](#) by Hodyl and Co, commissioned by Creative Victoria identified Footscray as a creative precinct, and notes the increased pressure on the local creative economy due to overdevelopment and gentrification.

LOCAL

- The Precinct Plan will enable us to support [WoMEDA's](#) strategies to strengthen employment, build on the unique and rich heritage and meet the economic development challenges of the future.
- [Maribyrnong City Council 2018-2023 Arts and Culture Strategy](#) outlines key themes designed to encourage participation, celebration and creative expression throughout the municipality. All themes strongly align to Footscray Community Arts annual programs and aspirations through the precinct plan, including 'factory for the arts' and 'places and spaces'.
- With regards to the local [Planning Scheme Context](#), we are located in the Footscray Activity Zone, which is applied in central Footscray for retail, office, business, residential, entertainment and community uses. There is a focus on the development of high-density housing in this area, including high-rises and also includes a statement "to encourage creative industries within the zone in particular within the Riverside Precinct" under 'economic development'.



Tiyami Pa'gan Anum performs at West Writers Forum 2019. Image by Gianna Rizzo.

Let's Talk

We invite you to support this landmark project in the West.

To discuss this opportunity or to arrange a guided site visit, please contact:

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FOOTSCRAY COMMUNITY ARTS



IMAGE: Field Drawing #1, by Kerrie Pollness, 2021 presented as part of CONNECT. Image by Gianna Rizzo.