



# MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL DISCUSSION PAPER

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
PROJECTURA

2 FEBRUARY 2023

MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY SERVICES



THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED BY PROJECTURA, FOR MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL.

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DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2 FEBRUARY 2023

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# Purpose

## Developing a Cultural Plan

Mid-Western Regional Council is reviewing and updating its Cultural Plan. The previous Cultural Plan was prepared in 2005, and a renewed direction is required. Council has engaged Projectura to work with the community to develop a Cultural Plan for the region.

The Plan will be a community-driven strategy that aims to strengthen the region's local cultural sector, address service gaps, and identify actionable goals for the region's future.

## About this Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper shares our cultural achievements and position in the Mid-Western region.

Your feedback and ideas will contribute to our new Cultural Plan.

We invite you to join the conversation as we further refine and develop our region's arts and cultural directions over the next five years and beyond.

## Definition of culture

Culture can mean many different things to different people.

*In 1982, UNESCO defined culture as "...distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes arts, modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs".*

*In 2001, the Australian Bureau of Statistics defined culture as "...the shared sense of meaning that determines a group's way of life... People usually participate in a number of cultures; a family culture, a work culture, a religious culture. Cultures also evolve over time".*

*In 2008, the United Nations articulated rights of Indigenous Peoples relating to culture as "Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalise their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature."*

*In 2013, British think tank DEMOS described culture as encompassing "... publicly funded, commercial and individual 'homemade' culture. Among its core expressive activities are language, sport, education, food and religion."*

For the development of the Cultural Plan, the following definition of culture has been employed:

Culture means the social landscape where we live, work and play.

When we talk about culture, we refer to the products of culture: the tools we use to transmit meaning, beliefs, attitudes, and identity.

Culture can include:

- The arts (performing arts, visual arts, architecture)
- Heritage conservation (museums, galleries, libraries)
- Cultural industries (including written media, broadcasting, film, recording and tourism)
- Festivals and events

# Our community

## Our identity

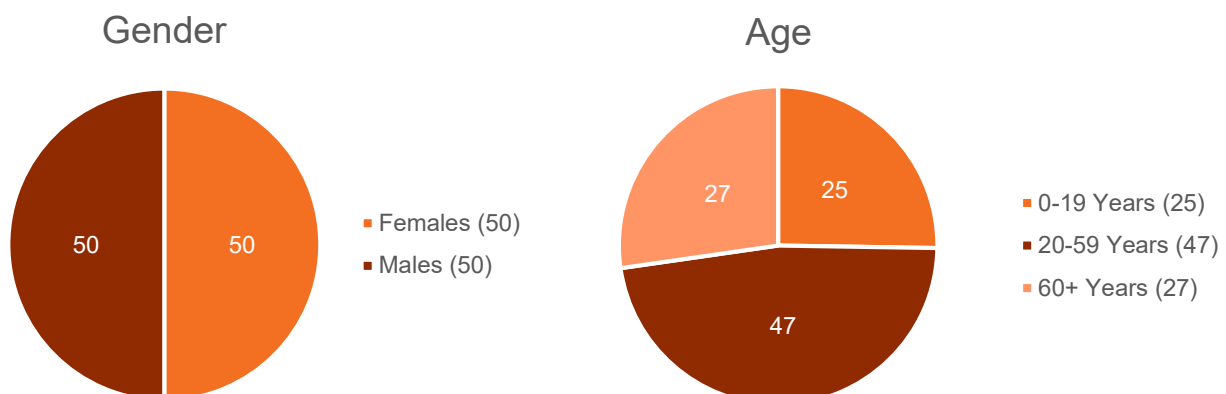
*"The lifestyle available to residents in the Mid-Western region...is second to none with a broad range of services, facilities and employment opportunities. The region also offers a unique span of local wine, food, cultural and sporting events."*<sup>1</sup>

The Mid-Western region is recognised for the following:

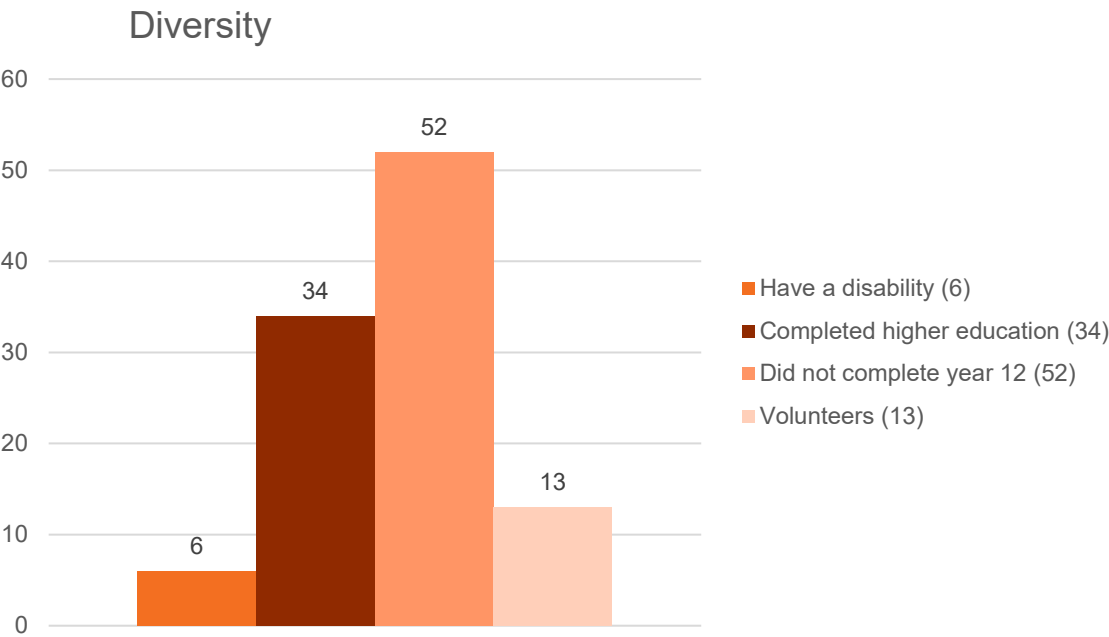
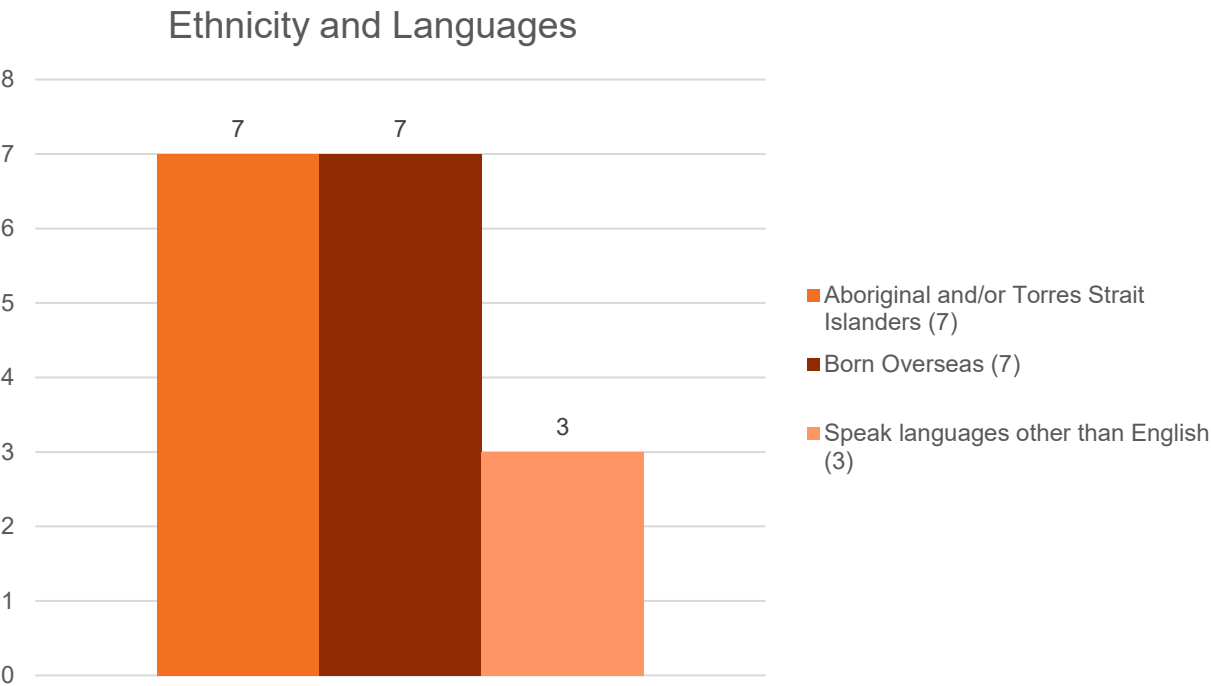
- Mudgee was the NSW Top Tourist Town in 2021 and 2022
- The iconic streets of Gulgong featured on Australia's former ten-dollar note
- An array of wineries, yum cha and olive estates in Rylstone
- The enormous production of cement in Kandos that contributed to the building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge
- A booming tourism industry and a high amount of tourism-related jobs
- Featuring the third largest grape-producing region in NSW, with a winemaking history dating back to the 1850s
- Strong tradition of preserving, protecting, and appreciating built heritage, sites and objects
- Easy access to picturesque scenery throughout the region
- The cultural heritage of the Wiradjuri people
- Its contemporary country location with metropolitan-style conveniences
- An ever-increasing population as the region attracts more visitors
- Local markets, community-based programs, and clubs across many passions and interests

## Our community

If the Mid-Western region consisted of 100 people, there would be:



<sup>1</sup> ABS Census. Economy profile. Community profile. REMPLAN, 2021.



## Our assets

The Mid-Western region is home to a wide range of community assets, people, places, and organisations that contribute to our community culture, and shape the region's art and cultural identity. Please note the following assets are not exhaustive or exclusive.

## Places

Halls and venues	Gulgong Memorial Hall
	Kandos Hall
	Kildallon Education Centre
	Mudgee Town Hall Theatre

	Prince of Wales Opera House, Gulgong
	Rylstone Hall
<b>Libraries</b>	Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone, Kandos
<b>Museums</b>	Gulgong Holtermann Museum
	Gulgong Pioneers Museum
	Kandos Museum
	Mudgee Museum
	Robert Stein Motorcycle Museum
<b>Galleries and studios</b>	Arts and Crafts, Mudgee
	Guluu Gallery
	Mudgee Arts Precinct
	Rosby Gallery and Sculpture Garden
	The Gallery, Gulgong
	WAYOUT Art Space
<b>Sculpture sites</b>	Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone, Kandos
<b>Showgrounds</b>	Mudgee, Rylstone

## Events

<b>Experiences</b>	Back to Gulgong Weekend
	Cementa Festival (biennial)
	Gulgong Show
	Gulgong Show Society
	Henry Lawson Festival
	Mudgee Cup
	Mudgee Show
	Mudgee Show Society
	Rylstone-Kandos Show
	Rylstone-Kandos Show Society
<b>Food</b>	Farmers' markets (weekends)
	Flavours of Mudgee (annual)
	Mudgee Region Food and Drink Trail
	Rylstone StreetFeast
<b>Performing arts, film and literary</b>	Mudgee Readers' Festival
	Town Hall Cinema screenings (monthly)
	Tunes at Burnbrae
<b>Visual arts</b>	Exhibitions at Clay Gulgong
	Mudgee Regional Library
	Mudgee Arts Precinct Portrait Prize (established 16 December 2022)
	Next Gen Portrait Prize (established 16 December 2022)

## Services

<b>Libraries</b>	Mobile library (throughout the region)
	Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone, Kandos

## Groups

<b>First Nations</b>	Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)
	North East Wiradjuri Company (NEWCO)
<b>Business organisations</b>	Business Mudgee
	Gulgong Chamber of Commerce
	Mudgee Fine Foods Inc
	Mudgee Region Tourism
	Mudgee Wine Grape Growers' Association
	Rylstone Kandos Chamber of Commerce
<b>Advisory groups</b>	Gulgong Arts Council
	Mudgee Arts Council
	Young people Council
<b>Music, radio and performing art</b>	Gulgong Eisteddfod Committee
	Gulgong Musical and Dramatical Society
	Kandos Rylstone Community Radio Inc (KRR)
	Mudgee Community Radio (2MG Radio/Real FM)
	Mudgee Performing Arts Society
<b>Visual arts</b>	Mudgee Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society
	Waste 2 Art
<b>Literacy</b>	Book groups at community libraries
	Circle of Stories
	Mudgee Valley Writers
	Mudgee Readers' Festival
	National Simultaneous Storytime
<b>History and heritage</b>	<b>Gulgong Historical Society</b>
	Henry Lawson Society
	Monday History Talks
	Mudgee Historical Society
	Rylstone and District Historical Society
<b>Community clubs</b>	Gulgong Men's Shed
	Kandos Rylstone Men's Shed Inc
	Mudgee Lions Club
	Mudgee Men's Shed



**Education**

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Rotary Club of Mudgee

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Rotary Club of Mudgee Sunrise

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The Rotary Club of Rylstone – Kandos

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Mudgee District U3A Inc

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# About Council

## Council's role

### Leader

Lead the development of a distinctive regional destination by listening to our communities. Develop our region's cultural brand and distinct personality.

### Partner

A welcoming, open, and dedicated approach creates opportunities for significant collaborations and partnerships.

### Advocate

Recognise the artistic and creative accomplishments of our community. Build robust, cohesive, and resilient communities through arts and culture.

### Connector

Link private, government, and other parties to inspire innovation and maximise investment.

### Steward

Collaborate with cultural heritage organisations and communities to provide access and care for our Aboriginal, colonial, and diverse settlement histories.

### Host

Enhance the region's reputation, improve mutual understanding, and build mutual respect by creating and maintaining the right environment for festivals, events, sporting celebrations, and cultural exchanges.

### Producer

Create and invest in conditions allowing our local arts and culture sector to thrive. Develop events, present creative works, and create bespoke presentations for our growing creative community.

## Council's Cultural Services team

Council's Cultural Services team sits within the Community and Cultural Services Department and the Community Directorate.

The Cultural Services team has two full-time staff, a Gallery Curator and Cultural Officer and one part-time Cultural Marketing Officer. The Manager of Community and Cultural Services supports them.

The team is responsible for managing and programming the Mudgee Arts Precinct and Cultural Workshops, the Public Art Collection, and the Mudgee Town Hall Cinema.

## Recent achievements

In the past five years, Council's key cultural achievements have been:

- The Mudgee Arts Precinct, a state-of-the-art gallery that was opened in November 2021. It features a central gallery, community gallery, and seminar spaces. The Precinct has since received the Australian Institute of Architecture's 2022 NSW Division Award for Public Architecture and IMAGinE Awards in recognition of the facility's construction and delivery of its inaugural year of programming
- Extended Mudgee Arts Precinct to include Cultural Workshops in February 2023, a facility purposed for art education and collaboration
- The newly opened Kildallon Education Centre as a place for community education and arts, run by the Mudgee Arts Council on behalf of the Mid-Western Regional Council
- Developed an extensive public art collection with sculpture walks and installations featured across Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone, and Kandos
- Refurbished the Mudgee Town Hall Theatre nine years ago
- Obtained arts and cultural funding through Create NSW

The Community Strategic Plan identifies that the community is proud of the region's developments in parks, its sense of community, clean and tidy CBDs, and sports grounds and libraries.

# Strategic perspective

## Strategic context

The Mid-Western region operates within the context of the following strategies in relation to its cultural sector.

### International

The adoption of the *UNESCO 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* signified recognition from the global community formally of both cultural and economic cultural expressions produced by creatives.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) acknowledges, for the first time, the roles of culture, creativity, and cultural diversity in solving sustainable development challenges, to advance economic growth and foster social inclusion.

### National

Launched in 2013, *Creative Australia* builds on *Creative Nation (1994)*, Australia's previous National Cultural Policy. The Policy describes the essential role of art and culture in individual lives and the nation's economic and social success.

### State

Create NSW launched the 10-year *Create in NSW: NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework* in February 2015. The framework focuses on increasing access and attendance by 15 per cent, excelling in the arts and business, and promoting organisational strength. The framework emphasises regional NSW, Western Sydney, and metropolitan Sydney.

Other relevant Create NSW strategies and plans include the *Arts 2025 Strategic Framework* and the *Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+*.

Destination NSW formulated the statewide *Destination Management Plan* (DMP) to provide a high-level framework for coordinated delivery for the visitor economy across the state. The document is a reference tool to develop the state's visitor economy and respond to market changes.

Other relevant Destination NSW strategies and plans include the: Visitor Economic Strategy 2030; NSW Food and Wine Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022; Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2017-2020; the NSW Regional Conferencing Strategy and Action Plan; and Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

### Regional

Mudgee Region Tourism's (MRT) *Destination Management Plan 2020-2025* provides an Action Plan aimed at enhancing the region's promotion, strengthening the experience offer and identity infrastructure projects, and identifying opportunities for growth and development. The Plan uses MRT's *Reset Your Senses* to identify priorities, including wine and food; health and wellbeing; the arts; music and creativity; heritage; and events.

The *Arts OutWest Strategic Plan 2021-2024* has identified six goals that focus on leadership, promotion, facilitation, education, advocacy, and management. These are aimed to be achieved by 2024, marking Art OutWest's 50<sup>th</sup> year of delivery across the NSW Central West.

The first *Destination Management Plan* for Destination Central West (DCW) is currently under public exhibition.

## Local

The Mudgee Arts Precinct was officially opened in November 2021. The *Mudgee Arts Precinct Strategic Plan (2022-2028)* outlines a community vision, and targeted objectives for the management of the Precinct: *Mudgee Arts Precinct aims to be a cultural hub that facilitates artistic excellence in regional NSW*. The priorities of the Plan include the local arts community; excellence in artistic programming; Aboriginal art and culture; public art; education; creative collaboration; and arts for young people.

The *Community Strategic Plan: Towards 2040* outlines the vision for the future: *A prosperous and progressive community we proudly call home*. The Plan sets out five focus areas: ensuring a safe and healthy community; protecting the natural environment; building a stable economy; connecting the region; and fostering good government.

The *Public Art Plan (2018)* outlines how Council will collaborate to develop a public art program to enrich the life of public spaces and inspire communal activities.

The region's most recent *Cultural Plan (2005)* addressed the need for a consistent vision for cultural development. The vision emphasises the economic role that cultural activities play in the region and the need for financial sustainability of services and facilities. Related to this is the focus on culture as a critical drawcard for crucial skills and professions in the region. Developed by a Cultural Plan Working Group, the goal of the document is to promote cultural inclusivity, focusing primarily on community culture and people, facilities, and networks.

Other relevant Council documents include Art Collection Policy; Events Assistance Policy; Local Heritage Grants Policy; Public Art Policy; Youth Strategy; Public Art Plan; Community Grants Program Policy; Recreation Strategy; Final Brand Mudgee Art Precinct; and the Regional Economic Development Strategy (2018-2022).

## Leaders and organisations

The following leaders and organisations influence arts and culture in the Mid-Western region:

International	United Nations: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
Independent	Australia Council for the Arts (Australia Council) is the Australian government's principal arm's length advisor for investment and development of the arts and cultural sector
Federal	Australian Government
State	Create NSW is the NSW State Government's arts policy and funding body that advises the Ministers for the Arts. Destination NSW is the lead government agency for tourism and major events in NSW.



## Regional

- Established in 2001, Mudgee Region Tourism is an independent body funded by Mid-Western Regional Council and funded by members and sponsors to promote assets in the region.
- Arts OutWest, the regional representative of Create NSW, is a not-for-profit incorporated organisation representing 12 Local Government Areas, including the Mid-Western region. Its aim is to promote, educate, facilitate, and advocate for arts and cultural development across the NSW Central West. The organisation forms part of the state network of 14 Regional Arts Development Organisations.
- The State Government established six Destination Networks in 2016 following a review of regional tourism. Destination Central West (DCW) NSW is the regional representative for Destination NSW, covering the same regional boundaries as Arts Out West. The network aims to advocate for the visitor economy of West NSW.

## Funding opportunities

Many grants are available to arts and cultural practitioners within the Mid-Western region. These are delivered by local, state, and philanthropic organisations. Please note the following list is not exhaustive or exclusive.

### Council grants

- Community grants
- Events assistance grants
- Heritage grants

### Other grants

- Aboriginal Affairs NSW
- Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program
- Building Better Regions Fund – Community Investment Stream
- Community Building Partnership
- Copland Foundation Grants
- Create NSW – Arts and Cultural Development Program, Cultural Grants Program
- Destination NSW
- Festivals Australia
- Multicultural NSW
- Museums and Galleries of NSW – Exhibition Grants, Audience Development Fund, Project Development Grants, Small Grants, Leg Up Grants, Skills Development Grants
- National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grants
- Regional Arts NSW
- Screen Australia

# Culture in our region

The following is a summary of arts and culture in the Mid-Western region.

## **Incorporating our rich social history into our built assets and public spaces**

From the worker's histories of Gulgong and Kandos to the boutique feel of Mudgee and Rylstone, the region's townships are celebrated for their distinctiveness. With over 450 listed heritage items and four heritage conservation areas across the major centres, the region truly appreciates its social history.

## **Conserving and acknowledging our natural heritage**

Located in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales, the region is enveloped by UNESCO World Heritage wilderness and various landscapes.

## **Developing our region as a cultural destination of choice**

Located off the beaten track, visiting the area is intentional. Named Australia's Top Tourism Top two years standing (2021 and 2022), the community has sustained a steady growth in tourism.

## **Energising the region with restaurants, bars, arts, and music**

The area takes advantage of its remoteness and celebrates goods and services that are skillfully crafted within the region. Food and wine, venues, and creative practices are carefully intertwined across the region to create unique experiences for visitors and locals.

## **A vibrant program of events and festivals**

Experiences in the region range from local community events, artisan markets, and intimate classes and workshops to large-scale sporting events, fine art exhibitions and shows, and food and wine festivals. Supported by Mudgee Region Tourism, events are available and promoted for a full range of audiences.

## **Spaces and activities for the community**

The region embodies a balance between excelling in the arts and the joy of creating art for art's sake. Spaces and services are available for creative endeavours at libraries in significant towns, Kildallon Education Centre, the Town Hall Theatre, and the Cultural Workshops at Mudgee Arts Precinct.

## **Experience, engage with, and learn from Wiradjuri culture**

The region features culturally significant aspects of Wiradjuri culture, including, but not limited to, The Drip, Hands on Rock, Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp), cuisine from Indigiearth Café, and art exhibited across the region.

## **Accessing spaces to create, make, and participate**

In a region where creatives wear many hats, collaborative working spaces are available to incubate ideas and develop artistic leadership. Many local businesses offer creative exhibitions, workshops and classes, and community spaces continue to pop up as a platform for knowledge generation, sharing, and learning.

# Have your say

## We would like to hear from you

This Discussion Paper has been developed to provide a starting point to the many conversations and community feedback about our cultural ambition for the Mid-Western region over the next five years.

We invite you to share your feedback on the region's arts, culture, heritage, and events, as it is now and how you would like to see it in the future. The first stage of community engagement is broad discussions. We are mainly interested in understanding what works well, what needs improvement, your vision for the region's cultural future, and your priorities.

Your input will shape the Cultural Plan into robust strategies and actions that meet the community's current and future needs.

## How do I contribute?

There are several ways that you can have your say on the Cultural Plan between 1 February and 10 March 2023.

- An online survey will be open: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MWRC\\_CP\\_Online](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MWRC_CP_Online)
- A range of pop-up engagement activities
- Workshops or drop-ins at existing meetings in early 2023
- Pop-ups and workshops by Projectura:
  - Thu 9 February 2023
    - 9:30-11am Workshop, Mudgee Arts Precinct
    - 1-2:30pm Workshop, Mudgee Arts Precinct
    - 4-6pm Pop-up, Gulgong (Mayne Street at front of IGA)
  - Fri 10 February 2023:
    - 2:30-4pm Pop-up, Rylstone (Louee Street in front of the CRT)
    - 4:30-6pm Pop-up, Kandos (Angus Avenue at front of IGA)
  - Sat 11 February 2023:
    - 9:30-11:30am Pop-up, Mudgee (Mudgee Art Precinct, Cultural Workshops opening)

We thank you for your involvement and welcome your continued interest and participation in this project.

*projectura.com.au*