Cultural Infrastructure Directions

A policy direction for cultural infrastructure planning in Western Australia

Cultural Infrastructure Directions (CID) will assist the State Government in its coordination and decision making on what is essential to effectively deliver arts and culture in Western Australia.

This document has been developed by the Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA), as the State’s agency responsible for creating and delivering Government policy for culture and the arts.

The purpose of CID is to align planning for sustainable cultural infrastructure with the public values of creativity and engagement, to improve outcomes and ensure best use of available resources.

This policy recognises the different needs and interests of a community and emphasises the unique requirements for arts and cultural activity throughout WA.

The policy has three key foundations:

- A community needs to plan according to its specific circumstances, skills and capacity. This needs to be undertaken before cultural infrastructure solutions are identified and resourced.

- Cultural infrastructure is not solely hard infrastructure; people, technology, cultural collections and buildings form DCA’s definition of cultural infrastructure. Together, these components of cultural infrastructure enable delivery of arts and cultural experiences.

- Partnerships are integral to successful cultural infrastructure. As well as financial investment, shared skills, expertise, ideas and resources are needed for collaborative projects and services.

Planning is essential to the development of existing and future cultural infrastructure.

It is important to consider the potential longevity of an investment, particularly in relation to ongoing costs associated with delivery of services and maintenance of cultural infrastructure.
1. Cultural Infrastructure

People and Organisations

People and organisations, with their skills, expertise and experience, sometimes referred to as ‘soft infrastructure’, are critical to cultural infrastructure across WA.

This involves:

1.1 A coordinated approach to cultural network mapping to understand and respond to cultural sector standards and community engagement.

1.2 Fostering and utilising links to other sectors to gain greater understanding of how to work with the community and networks.

1.3 Research and consultation that enhances collective understanding of the diverse cultural and artistic circumstances of a community.

1.4 Providing opportunities for skills and professional development that contributes to creative people and economies.

1.5 Promoting and supporting WA content and cultural collections through creative people.
2. Cultural Infrastructure

Technology

Technology is a significant form of cultural infrastructure and enables innovation and artistic practice. Different forms of technology contribute to the wide range of cultural and artistic work (for example: education technology, music technology, lighting technology, film technology, biotechnology, engineering and fabrication).

In particular, digitisation of cultural material enables broader access and engagement with cultural material and artistic product.

This involves:

2.1 Technology as a tool to increase access to, and engagement with, arts and culture.

2.2 Technology as a creative medium.

2.3 Technology that enables preservation, conservation, interpretation and sharing of collections and cultural material.
3. Cultural Infrastructure

Places and Buildings

Arts and cultural activity happens in many different ways and in varied places. From purpose-built venues to repurposed buildings and public spaces, planning for arts and cultural activity will consider present and future functions and challenges, as well as the impact on the broader environment and community.

This involves:

3.1 Best practice business planning that identifies community circumstances, ongoing ownership and operational structures, quality content development, best practice design principles and consideration of alternatives to the built form.

3.2 Places and buildings that support state planning initiatives and strategies.

3.3 Places and buildings that are fit-for-purpose and contribute to best practice cultural and artistic work.

3.4 Governance that supports places and buildings to deliver specialised, co-located or integrated services.

Key Principles of Cultural Infrastructure Directions Policy

DCA will address the following when planning for and investing in cultural infrastructure:

- The significant role that people and organisations play in supporting service delivery.
- The contribution of technology for access and engagement by individuals and communities across WA and beyond.
- Places and buildings that support best practice of specialised arts and cultural activities.
- Sustainable infrastructure and access to culture and arts.
Strategic context and ongoing policy development

CID contributes to DCA’s broader policy development and strategic direction.

The Policy will inform DCA’s:

- Response to the Government’s Strategic Asset Management Framework.
- Development of the Strategic Asset Plan.
- Alignment with the Public Value Measurement Framework.
- Interaction with State and Federal planning agendas.
- Partnerships with others.

DCA will develop and manage CID in the following ways:

- Regular review and evaluation of CID, including ensuring CID aligns with DCA’s Strategic Plan and Public Value Measurement Framework.
- Foster and implement meaningful and sustainable partnerships and programs that are consistent with CID.
Contact Us

The Department of Culture and the Arts is available to provide advice and guidance on Cultural Infrastructure Directions.

For more information contact:

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