



2024 - 2026

City of Busselton

Busselton Cultural Precinct Strategy



Contents

Executive Summary	1
Cultural Interpretation Strategy 2020.....	2
Strategic Alignment	2
External Consultation.....	3
Conservation.....	3
Disability Access.....	3
Community Consultation	3
Strategic Community Plan	3
Events Strategy	4
Cultural Interpretation Strategy.....	4
A New Vision for the Busselton Cultural Precinct.....	5
Programming Strategy.....	6
Interpretation Anchors.....	6
One-off and Regular Programming	6
Special Annual Events	6
Branding & Wayfinding	7
Education Program.....	7
Heritage Tourism	8
Accessibility	8
Use of Cultural Precinct Spaces	9
The Weld Community Theatre	9
Saltwater Performance Space	9
Saltwater Gallery.....	10
Bar/Restaurant	10
Merenj Boodja Bush Garden	10
Settlement Art Sculpture Walk.....	11
The Old Courthouse Complex	11
Bond Store.....	12
Old Busselton Gaol Immersive Experience	12
The Court Room	12
Police Cottage 1 – Busselton Art Society	12
Police Cottage 2 – Cultural Precinct Information Hub and Gift Shop.....	13
The Courtyard.....	14
The Stables Artist Village.....	14
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Building.....	15
Cultural Precinct Streetscape and Surrounds.....	15
STRATEGIC PHASES	16

Phase 1 (Year 1)	16
Saltwater Development and Opening	16
Phase 2 (Year 2 & 3)	16
Cultural Precinct Further Development.....	16
Strategies	17
Critical Success Factors	18
Measures of Success	18
Reference Documents	19

Executive Summary

The Busselton Cultural Precinct (the Precinct), currently known as the ArtGeo Cultural Complex, is located at the northern end of Queen Street, bounded by Marine Terrace and Adelaide Street. It is a short walk from two of the City's major activity drivers– the city centre and the foreshore, including Busselton Jetty – however presents as somewhat disconnected from both.

Through a consolidated approach to cultural interpretation, place branding, and programming and by leveraging the development of a new performing arts facility as a catalyst, the Precinct has the potential to shift from being a place of some interest to one that is a key attraction and activity driver in its own right. The Precinct is home to some of Western Australia's oldest buildings and marks historic moments in time, including the post-settlement establishment of civic life, through the Old Courthouse and Police Complex. Today, it is managed by the City of Busselton in a capacity as both asset owner/manager and venue operator.

In early 2024, the City of Busselton will have a new art gallery, performing arts and convention venue in the Precinct. The purpose of the Busselton Cultural Precinct Strategy is to highlight opportunities and identify options for future usage of the heritage listed spaces within the Precinct that will enhance the Saltwater development and grow both our local community and our visitor's cultural experiences.



Saltwater Busselton – Architectural Render

Cultural Interpretation Strategy 2020

In 2020, the City commissioned Ink Strategy to write a Cultural Interpretation Strategy (CIS) to unify, deepen and diversify the themes, narratives and stories that are part of Busselton's cultural heritage. The CIS has drawn out important themes and concepts through community consultation to determine the feel and design of the performing arts centre and development of the Cultural Precinct.

The CIS identified how a unifying and defining place essence can be created that is sensed and experienced, tangibly and intangibly, whilst in the Precinct and Saltwater. An experience unique to Busselton that expresses our rich history, values, memories and stories. The Place Essence for the precinct was summarised as:

An immersive expression of Busselton's captivating coastline, community and cultures. Creative experiences ignite the senses, inviting people to discover the region's rich heritage and compelling future.

The creation of an identity and brand for the whole Cultural Precinct, including Saltwater, needs to be something that appeals to people – like 'Yagan Square,' 'Elizabeth Quay' or 'The Rocks' - an identity that can be remembered when visiting Busselton. The historical significance of the heritage listed Courthouse Complex is comparable to the Rocks in Sydney. The Rocks is a good example of a key historic icon that has used its location, historical places and past extremely well in branding itself to place it on the map for locals and tourists. Establishing a sense of place like 'The Rocks' is also achievable for the Busselton Cultural Precinct.



Old Courthouse Complex 1916

Strategic Alignment

The Cultural Precinct Strategy aligns with the following social and economic objectives in the City of Busselton Strategic Community Plan 2021 -2031:

- Recognise, respect and support community diversity and cultural heritage.
- Facilitate and plan for event and cultural experiences that provide social connection.
- Provide well maintained community assets through robust asset management practices.
- Work with key partners to facilitate the activation of our town centres, creating destinations and consumer choice.
- Continue to promote the District as the destination of choice for events and unique tourism experiences.

External Consultation

Conservation

The Busselton Courthouse and Police Complex Conservation Management Plan undertaken by Hocking Heritage Studio in 2020 identifies a clear plan for the conservation of the buildings within the complex and the City needs to ensure the spaces are activated and used to their fullest potential by the community and visitors, otherwise there is little value in conserving the buildings.

Disability Access

In 2021, Morris Goding Access Consulting conducted a Disability Access Compliance Audit, which proposes a series of building works to ensure universal access into the various buildings in the precinct. The City has a clear duty to ensure all of their public buildings are accessible to people with disabilities, and although the heritage nature of these buildings presents several challenges, the Disability Access Compliance Audit identifies clear recommendations to assist with meeting these challenges and should be included in any future vision for the precinct.

Community Consultation

Strategic Community Plan

During late 2020, the City undertook the biennial review of the Strategic Community Plan, of which a total of 1,658 people participated. A combination of random sampling and targeted engagement was used to obtain a diverse representation from our community. In response to the question ‘what matters to you’, the following vision was articulated:

The community told us what they loved about living here in the City of Busselton, and how they would describe their ideal City as we look towards 2035.

The community also told us what they would like Council to prioritise when planning for the future.

There was a great range of comments reflecting the diversity of our community. Here's a small sample.

Better options for teenagers to get to places as well as more activities aimed at teenagers	A City of Busselton Council (and employees) that communicate and listen to the ratepayers of the various areas	A good transport system between suburbs and the CBD
Focus on residents not tourists	Keep the natural environment as pristine as possible	Improve road networks and safer roads
Increase flights from interstate to connect us for business and tourism. More professional businesses will move to the area with this connectivity, creating jobs and bringing money for growth of critical infrastructure	Time taken and more community say in what is happening to our area	Focus on not making our City like every other popular tourist destination whereby the constant development destroys the original reason for its popularity
Showcase our natural environment	Better sporting facilities	Structured plan for the urban growth (that will occur and must occur) to create quality of design and diversity of lot size options
A substantial sea wall to protect us from storms/climate change sea level rises	More work opportunities	More support for marginalised community sectors – youth, aged, unemployed
	More music and nightlife - especially music and entertainment	

Support was expressed for arts and culture opportunities including a performing arts centre, creating more things for young people to do, indoor activities, nightlife activation, vibrancy, concerts and local community based events. There was also significant commentary around the need to focus on industry diversification and increased employment opportunities, a reduction in empty shops and activation of the CBD.

Events Strategy

In January 2019, as part of a review of the City’s Event Strategy, a survey was conducted which received 154 responses.

- 81% valued or highly valued our vision to be ‘Events Capital WA’.
- 85% think that we have adequate number of events or would like to see more.
- When asked what other events they would like in the City of Busselton, the most popular responses were – concerts/live music, cultural events (theatre, comedy, pop/classical music, ballet), family/youth events, food truck events, winter festivals, New Year’s Eve celebrations, water based events (stand up paddle, canoe, sailing).
- 75% said that they may, or would definitely, attend more events if the City had a purpose built indoor performing arts facility.



Event crowd outside of the Old Courthouse

Cultural Interpretation Strategy

Engagement to inform the Cultural Interpretation Strategy was undertaken between May and August 2020 involving 250 community members and key stakeholders across arts, heritage, tourism, business and creative industries; Traditional Owners and the wider community.

Aboriginal culture featured strongly in community consultation for the development of the Busselton Cultural Precinct Cultural Interpretation Strategy. Overall three key themes emerged which summarise the cultural values of our community, which can be expressed through programming and development of the Busselton Cultural Precinct.

People of the Bay	Boola Murrijo (Journey)	On Show
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographe Bay - the focal point for local community and lifestyle • A City built by endurance and entrepreneurial spirit • The community's intrinsic connections to the water and the water system – Vasse River and estuaries • Its abundant natural environment and seasonality nurtures people as a formative element of Busselton's identity, culture and lifestyle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past, present and future • 40,000 years of Wadandi Boodja-Remote port for international traders • Colonial settlement, agriculture and industry, regional centre and innovation hub • Trials and triumphs, dark histories and times of joy, the honest truths of evolution • Continuing culture bringing people together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busselton's role as the centre of the regional economy, known for creativity and innovation • Shining a light on local talent and creativity, where heritage, culture and community grow visitation and the economy • New places and experiences showcasing local talent, attracting new energy, investment and visitors from near and far • A place for locals and visitors; a worldly feel with a local, grounded vibe.

OUR PLACE. OUR PEOPLE. OUR STORIES.

PROGRAMMING
STRATEGY

HERITAGE
TOURISM

EDUCATION
PROGRAM

BRANDING &
WAYFINDING

ACCESSIBILITY

Our vision is that Busselton Cultural Precinct will be a thriving village of artists, makers and community groups, as well as a hub for the wider creative community of Busselton. It is an economic driver for the businesses in the CBD and an entertainment hub, igniting the night-time economy.

It's a place that belongs to the people of Busselton and is for everyone. A place for sharing stories and gathering together. A place that is welcoming. A place that inspires us.

With the construction of Saltwater, the Precinct site will expand and although the new facility will undoubtedly be a driver of visitation, it is crucial to invest in a vision for the entire Precinct. The Precinct's multi-layered past is a significant asset in terms of delivering an authentic and distinctive place experience to visitors, the potential of which remains largely untapped. The history and appeal of the site needs to be brought fully to life in a way that enriches, rather than constrains, its present and future.

Busselton Cultural Precinct has the potential to become a tourism destination in its own right with a unique offering to attract visitors locally, nationally and internationally. It will become a hub of creativity and entertainment in the Southwest, loved by locals and visitors alike. With carefully planned phases of development, this vision will be achieved and the full potential of this one-of-a-kind location will be realised.



Dirty Laundry Cabaret Performance

Programming Strategy

Programming across the Precinct will take a global approach to ensure year-round activation. A Place Activation Hierarchy describes how different activities will work together to support cultural identity and bring the precinct to life.

Interpretation Anchors

These are defining features that will be delivered all year round or are permanently placed in the Precinct. For example, the Settlement Project Sculpture Walk is a permanent installation in the streetscape of the precinct that celebrates the history of Busselton and its foundation industries and people. Similar public artworks, permanent exhibits and experiences will be available for visitors and locals to enjoy all year round, any time they visit the precinct. These features will help bring to life the stories of the region's historic characters and Busselton's heritage buildings. An artwork by Sandra Hill will be embedded in the Saltwater foyer and tells a story of the Wadandi People and their connection with fire. In this way there is acknowledgement of the local First People at the heart of the building while being an educational tool for visitors about the land they walk on.

One-off and Regular Programming

Regular initiatives and activations will happen frequently throughout the precinct and Saltwater. These events are presented by the City, precinct tenants and partners. They will range from theatre shows, to rock concerts and community productions in the Saltwater Theatre to outdoor markets and performances in the Courtyard at the Courthouse. They include festivals and markets that take over the whole block of the precinct with the road closed to traffic, seeing thousands of people stream into the precinct.

Special Annual Events

These are iconic events that happen every year and that locals and visitors alike look forward to, can count on and plan for. Each year, these events develop and grow and add to the city's reputation as the events capital of WA. Examples are the Busselton Art Award, CinefestOZ, and a new festival in development with the Aboriginal Advisory Group – Saltwater Festival, which will celebrate Wadandi culture through art, performance and food.



Leeuwin College of Performance Dancers 2022

Branding & Wayfinding

A distinct and cohesive brand will be developed that captures the broad spectrum of experiences that visitors can expect when they visit the precinct. Wayfinding signage along the block of Queen Street between Adelaide Street and Marine Terrace will need to be re-designed to incorporate Saltwater and this is an opportunity to ensure the new vision for the precinct is captured and promoted through clear and distinct wayfinding signage. This will include an entry statement and inviting people into the precinct. Cultural precinct branding will tie the precinct together and ensure clear communication to visitors. Wayfinding within the precinct will provide best-practice in accessibility and ensure non English speakers are able to find their way easily.

Education Program

With the unique offering of heritage and arts experiences, we see potential to build a world-class education program. Curriculum-linked historic tours will be offered to schools across the South West. Recreations of historic court cases held in the courtroom will be re-enacted by children and their teachers in full costume. Promotional materials will be developed and delivered to schools each year in November in preparation for their annual budgeting and we expect school tours to run every week with increases year on year in school tour bookings. Live performances for young people programmed at Saltwater will be curriculum-linked and include educational add-ons such as talks by the author, workshops like puppetry and Q&A's after the show.

An agreement is being developed between the City of Busselton and Edith Cowan University to provide a satellite program of classes for West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in the South West. Saltwater Theatre space will become the home of this tertiary education program. Technicians will be trained through this program and go on to be employed to work in the theatre. There will be a strong focus on the precinct becoming known as a unique education space for all age groups.



Geographe Primary School 2022

Heritage Tourism

In Australia, over 9 million domestic travellers engaged with heritage-specific activities in 2017. These travellers were worth over \$12 billion to the Australian economy and represented 77% of all engagement with existing heritage tourism products. Over 30 million individual trips made by Australian domestic travellers involved heritage and culture activities. 7.8% of all domestic day visitors and 15.9% of all domestic overnight visitors engaged with heritage and culture activities during trips made in 2017 (*Tourism Research Australia 2017*).

Our vision is that the Old Courthouse becomes a place where heritage comes to life through contemporary tools for storytelling. Visitors to the Old Gaol will experience an immersive sound and video installation and self-guided audio tour that brings them into the stories of ex-inmates. The lively characters are brought to life through engaging storytelling. Visitors of all ages will be entertained and moved by the stories they experience. As they tell their friends and families, this will become a must-see venue for any visitor to the region.

Accessibility

The new vision is for the precinct to be as accessible and inclusive as possible, understanding that there are some aspects of the heritage buildings that don't lend themselves to wheelchair access. The Saltwater facility has been designed with accessibility front of mind, including wheelchair access to all areas, specially designed wheelchair accessible makeup stations in dressing rooms and wheelchair access for purchases at the bars. Other access considerations will be addressed such as audio description for sight impaired visitors and all-gendered toilets to ensure inclusion for transgender and non-binary visitors.

The culture of the Wadandi people will be celebrated and promoted through all aspects of the precinct, including programming, heritage tourism and the education program. Artwork by Wadandi artists will be a key place-making feature throughout the Precinct and the programming within Saltwater will include regular events featuring First Nations performers. The developing education program will include opportunities to share Wadandi culture through the Merenj Boodja Bush Garden.

All staff and volunteers will be provided with Cultural Competency training by Wadandi educators, as well as LGBTQIA+ awareness training and Disability awareness training. Staff will be empowered with knowledge to ensure they provide a welcoming and accessible space for all visitors to the precinct.



Busselton Pride 2



Use of Cultural Precinct Spaces

The Weld Community Theatre

The Weld Theatre is a 120 seat theatre and has gained iconic status as a community hub for theatre lovers. This space will continue to be leased by The Busselton Repertory Club as their home base. There are opportunities for shared programming between the Repertory Club and the Saltwater programming team. This could see edgy and niche performances programmed into the space for a smaller more intimate audience. In addition, it can be used as an extra breakout space for large conferences and business events held at Saltwater. With improved backstage areas linking in with the backstage areas of Saltwater, the Weld Theatre will continue to be the new and improved home of community theatre in Busselton. A perfect fringe show space.

Saltwater Performance Space

The 650 seat theatre at the heart of the Saltwater facility will be the first of its kind in the South West. Fully flexible with seating removable to reveal a 1000 capacity open space, it can host everything from world-class live theatre and dance to trade shows and even music festivals. Programming will ensure access and activation by all sectors of the community. This space will be a hub for young people as much as it is for our older community members. Businesses will make use of its state-of-the-art conferencing facilities, whilst young people will enjoy the state-of-the-art sound system to host music events.

The Saltwater Programming Strategy outlines annual usage by community groups, businesses and arts producers. Activation of this space will be ad-hoc, depending on what events are being held but is expected to reach 60% occupancy in the first year, with activation increasing each year after that.

When events are on, this space will be supported by paid staff across the back of house areas, a paid Front of House Supervisor, paid bar staff and a team of volunteers in the roles of ushers and door attendants. The Saltwater Box Office will be open 9am to 4pm 7 days a week.



Sea of Light by Patch Theatre

Saltwater Gallery

The Saltwater Gallery will be an A-Class gallery, known for its high calibre national touring exhibitions. It will become a drawcard for tourists and the local community alike. The Programming Strategy for this space envisages a carefully selected cross-section of iconic local artists, national exhibitions and curated group exhibitions of interest to locals. The Gallery will be supported by volunteers and will host school groups for tours on a regular basis. A designated Digital Gallery Space will showcase digital and screen-based works. Opening hours of the Gallery will be aligned with the opening hours of the Saltwater Box Office, with Box Office staff supervising volunteers. The Gallery will also be open whenever other events are programmed in the building. This provides an additional attraction for visitors to the centre.

Bar/Restaurant

The former Agricultural Bank building, most recently housing the ArtGeo Gallery is envisaged to be a commercial hospitality hot spot, servicing Saltwater, attracting people to the area and linking the CBD and Foreshore. The building has potential to activate an alfresco dining experience, using the laneway, courtyard and frontage to Marine Terrace and Queen Street. An “Expressions of Interest” process will culminate in the nomination of a preferred operator, who will lease the building from the City. It is expected that the operator will work closely with the Saltwater functions team to support catering for functions and events at Saltwater.

Merenj Boodja Bush Garden

This garden has high potential as an educational space. The City will continue to liaise with the Undalup Association and Karri Karrak Aboriginal Corporation to develop cultural displays and information about the Wadandi culture to be shared with visitors to the precinct. This space can also be promoted and programmed with more events in conjunction with the Bond Store.



Signage for Merenj Boodja Bush Garden

Settlement Art Sculpture Walk

This project adds a highly visual aspect to the streetscape of the Cultural Precinct, signalling to visitors unfamiliar with the area that this is a place of cultural heritage. Alongside highly visible wayfinding signage on either end of the precinct, this sculpture walk will draw visitors into the precinct. The sculptures will be maintained and promoted as outlined in the Cultural Precinct Asset Management Plan and Cultural Interpretation Strategy.



The Old Courthouse Complex

Courthouse Complex is made up of several independent buildings and spaces, each being used for independent purposes by individual groups. There are potential benefits in bringing these groups together to develop a strategy for activation of the spaces throughout the week and all year round. For the precinct to be consistently activated, each space needs to have its own identity and point of difference, unique to its purpose, but they need to work symbiotically together towards a wider purpose.

The complex is currently kept open through a community of volunteers, coordinated by City staff. This volunteer community, whilst passionate and dedicated, is dwindling due to several factors, including COVID risk hesitancy. A concerted effort needs to be made to keep volunteers engaged and recruit new volunteers in order for the facility to continue to function at an optimal level. Losing volunteers would greatly increase the staff costs of running the facility.



Artists and Volunteers at The Old Courthouse

Bond Store

The Bond Store is both historically and aesthetically significant and there are opportunities for it to be more widely used in the future for private and corporate functions and events. This space is currently being used as an exhibition space and occasionally as an artist in residence space. This usage will continue to grow and the space will become known as a destination for local emerging artists. Whereas the gallery across the road at Saltwater will host more high profile artists, this gallery is a space for first time solo exhibits and local artisans.

As a small events space, the Bond Store benefits from opening up the double doors and having events spill out into the Merenj Boodja Bush Garden.

Old Busselton Gaol Immersive Experience

There are many opportunities to utilise the Gaol Cells in future programming. Using digital technology, the experience of visiting the Gaol cells will see characters from the past brought to life and elicit an emotional response for visitors, making it a more memorable experience. The experience will include audio stories of inmates throughout the decades, and screens with images and video from the history of the complex. There is also an opportunity to attract more events using the whole complex including the cells e.g. Cabin Fever – Dark and Stormy. With the gift shop relocated to the Police Cottages, the day room and old courtroom will become an entry point to the Old Gaol Experience, with audio tours departing from there. The ‘Aboriginal cell’ will have interpretation developed by a local Wadandi elder and artist, to ensure cultural consideration.

The Court Room

The Court Room is a place of historic significance having had some very interesting court cases tried in the space. These stories will be brought to life through a permanent installation, potentially including the story of the Georgette Shipwreck. Our education program will see school students re-enacting these stories as part of a curriculum based tour



Old Busselton Gaol Immersive Experience

Police Cottage 1 – Busselton Art Society

Currently leased by the Busselton Art Society for workshops and exhibitions, this space will continue to be a home for community arts into the future. The Art Society operates as a member organisation, running classes during the day and holding exhibitions in their space throughout the year. The gallery is open daily and is a much loved community arts space.

Staff will continue to have regular stakeholder lease meetings to keep people abreast of what is happening in the precinct and Saltwater for future opportunities. Joint programming and marketing opportunities will also be explored and developed to further activate the precinct.

Police Cottage 2 – Cultural Precinct Information Hub and Gift Shop

This cottage is currently leased by Acting Up, a not-for-profit youth drama group. Classes run from 3.30pm to 7pm 3 days a week, so the building is closed the rest of the time. The cottage opens onto Queen Street as well as the Courtyard behind. This provides an ideal opportunity to move and develop the current Courthouse Gift Shop into a commercial South West creative retail space that can activate the current lack of daily opening hours in this space, and become an information hub for the entire Cultural Precinct. Recognising Aboriginal culture in the precinct, local Aboriginal artists will be encouraged to provide work to be sold in the gift shop.

Currently the town centre and foreshore are the major tourist attractors, the activation of this Police Cottage will attract visitors and locals daily, allowing the precinct to be a main driver of visitors into the City from the Foreshore. It will become the go-to place for information on arts and culture within the Geopraphe region.

To reinvent and provide a more relevant retail experience that provides commercial and cultural dividends, this change of use was recommended as the most beneficial course of action in Richard Harling's Retail Report in February 2019. This was also supported by the Heritage Interpretation Strategy developed in 2021.

Moving the Gift Shop out of the Old Courtroom to the Police Cottage will create space in the Old Courtroom for a permanent installation and exhibition telling stories of local legends. It will be the entryway into the Old Gaol Immersive Experience.

Forward planning discussions with Acting Up has presented an opportunity for them to utilise Saltwater after it is completed. Here their youth drama classes can continue and their annual production, as well as rehearsals of their involvement in other productions throughout the precinct. This will activate Saltwater's Level 2 Rehearsal Space during the day. The details of the arrangements for their use of Saltwater would need to be negotiated.



Local arts & crafts for sale in Gift Shop

The Courtyard

Activation of the Courtyard can be achieved through the development of a performance program to open the precinct after 5pm for locals and visitors, supporting local artists/creatives and regular events. This will increase visitation to the Courtyard and assist in the identity and branding of the precinct as a creative space. Ideas include:

- Weekly free sundowner events from spring to autumn, including multi-cultural performances such as dance and music.
- Ticketed contemporary music events and performing arts activity to build the profile of the location to the whole South West region.
- Linking more with foreshore events (City Youth, Community and Events teams), and local hospitality venues, leveraging joint marketing opportunities.
- Regular food/artisan markets.
- Hosting early regular weekly Yoga, Pilates etc.
- Shade sail – encourage people who work in CBD to come and have lunch on the lawn with a busker on Fridays.

There is opportunity to support these initiatives through funding applications, private sponsorship and partnerships and City funding.



Courtyard at The Old Courthouse

The Stables Artist Village

The three artist studios will create opportunities for short and long term artist residencies. Artworks could be promoted in the Police Cottage 2, linking the visitor to the experience of visiting a local artist at work with the retail experience. This would increase visitation through the retail outlet and into the Courtyard, activating the space. These spaces will be open for expressions of interest every year. Artists will be selected with complimentary but unique practices. In addition, the Fodder Room will be a space for local artists to run workshops all year round and promoted widely as an artist workshop space available to be booked by the community. The Cultural Precinct team will run classes and workshops daily, catering to retirees, home school groups, mums & bubs, after school students, social groups and professional development for local artists.

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Building

The site currently housing the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) occupies prime street frontage on the corner of Queen and Adelaide Street, and is owned by the State Government. The State could consider in future planning opportunities for the site to be developed to support greater activation and complementary uses to the broader Cultural Precinct.

The site could, for example, support the growth of the South West's creative industry sector as identified in the South West Development Commission's Strategic Plan [SWDC-Strategic-Plan.pdf](#) (page 17) and Regional Development South West Regional Futures Strategy. Industries which could be supported include film, TV, commercial radio, design, visual arts, music and publishing. With an upgrade, the building in the short term could be a space for the development of creative programs, a rehearsal/studio production space for musicians and the film industry, and a central place for all artists to meet and network. This in turn would have a flow on effect of increasing the use of other indoor and outdoor spaces for spin off events, conferences and workshops.

The City will look to partner with others and work with the State Government and DBCA to explore ways in which this site can support activation of the Cultural Precinct throughout the day, evening and weekends and help to connect Busselton foreshore with the CBD

Cultural Precinct Streetscape and Surrounds

The Cultural Precinct streetscape was designed to be an events space. In 2012, when the area was updated the streetscape was designed to have a market square feel, creating a place for busking, entertainment, socialising and night markets. The stretch of Queen Street between Marine Terrace and Adelaide Street is regularly closed for events and it is envisaged there will be an increase in these types of larger events/festivals using both indoor and outdoor venues within the Cultural Precinct.

Road closures currently add significant cost to the event organiser to follow temporary road closure procedures and the visual signage and barriers detract from the visitor experience. There is also an inherent risk of confusion, particularly at busy times, with the volume of pedestrian traffic interacting with pedestrians crossing both Queen Street and Marine Terrace to go to and from Saltwater to car parking areas. With up to 1,000 visitors expected to stream out of Saltwater during larger events this issue could become problematic. That issue aside there is also a greater opportunity to improve and take increased advantage of the amenity and activation of the Precinct created by events and other activity at Saltwater.

The City will explore opportunities for the use of the Cultural Precinct streetscape as part of the development of Busselton City Centre Precinct Structure Plan, which is already an action in the City's Corporate Business Plan.

STRATEGIC PHASES

Phase 1 (Year 1)

Saltwater Development and Opening

During this phase, time and resources will be focused on developing the operations and strategic plans for Saltwater. Programming will be concentrated on the new facility, drawing the community into the venue in various different ways. The Programming Strategy for Saltwater identifies how this will be achieved.

The Old Courthouse will continue to operate and grow during this time, with programming focused towards building up educational audiences such as school tours and workshops. Work will continue on improving accessibility throughout the Old Courthouse Complex. To reduce staff time spent on programming and event coordination, the community will be encouraged to hire the spaces, with in-kind venue hire offered and other cost reduction initiatives to encourage the use of the spaces by the community.

A Venue Management System will be implemented across the whole precinct, which will be rolled out alongside the opening of Saltwater and will aim to reduce time spent on taking venue enquiries and payments. This system will make the process of hiring a venue space extremely easy and intuitive for both the hirer and City staff.

Phase 2 (Year 2 & 3)

Cultural Precinct Further Development

Once Saltwater is up and running and the Programming Strategy is seeing results, the focus will be on developing the remainder of the Cultural Precinct into a thriving creative hub and tourism attraction. This will include the development of the Busselton City Centre Precinct Structure Plan and recommendations to improve the effective use of the streetscape as an events space, working with partners, the State and DBCA to explore the future development of the DBCA building and a new cohesive brand for the Busselton Cultural Precinct to tie all the spaces together. Precinct tenants will be involved in these planning processes and encouraged to identify strategies to increase visitation. The education program will continue to be a focus, with school tours running on a weekly basis. Events and artisan markets will be held across the summer season, with Saltwater providing activation over the winter months. The Busselton Gaol Immersive Experience will become renowned as a major tourist attraction.

Strategies

The following strategies will support achieving the vision for the Busselton Cultural Precinct to become a thriving creative and entertainment hub for locals and visitors alike:

	Strategies
1.	Develop and implement a Cultural Precinct programming plan, including permanent tourist attractions, annual events and one-off activations throughout the precinct.
2.	Develop a unique curriculum-linked education experience.
3.	Develop a strong Cultural Precinct brand.
4.	Relocate and re-imagine the gift shop as both a retail shop and an information hub for the Precinct.
5.	Engage and support the local Aboriginal community to provide products for retail and cultural experiences/events.
6.	Support the growth of commercial food and beverage offerings in the Precinct.
7.	Engage Precinct tenants in strategic planning to increase activation of the Precinct.
8.	Explore opportunities for management of the Cultural Precinct streetscape in the development of the Busselton City Centre Precinct Structure Plan.
9.	Partner with others and work with the State Government and DBCA to explore ways in which the DBCA site can support activation of the Cultural Precinct and help to connect Busselton foreshore with the CBD.
10.	Develop mechanisms to seek feedback from place users, the local community and tenants and to measure the impact of changes.
11.	Improve the visitor experience through wayfinding, online bookings and access to information.
12.	Develop initiatives to promote and encourage community hire and activation of Precinct spaces.
13.	Develop an improved Volunteer Management Plan to ensure efficient use of volunteer resources and timely recruitment.
14.	Prioritise accessibility, inclusion and the user experience.

Critical Success Factors

The following will be important to the success of the Cultural Precinct Strategy:

- Clear understanding and support for the purpose and objectives as a heritage, cultural, art and tourism attraction.
- Clear financial and usage goals.
- Sufficient resourcing to deliver good quality activation initiatives.
- Marketing and communications strategy to publicise activation initiatives.
- Baseline data about current levels of usage and finances, to enable tracking of changes over time.
- Mechanisms to seek feedback from place users, the local community and tenants and to measure the impact of changes.
- Buy-in from the creative tenants and commercial tenants.
- Increased flexibility in relation to conditions on the title.
- Acquisition of the DBCA site and funding for its development.
- Good relationships with the Aboriginal community, other potential partners and stakeholders.
- Ability to attract and retain appropriately skilled and motivated volunteers

Measures of Success

The success of the activation of the Cultural Precinct and increased awareness by the general public will be measured by increases in:

- Growing number and diversity of events and workshops held.
- Diversity and number of visitors to the Cultural Precinct
- Satisfaction of visitors
- Venue hire booking increases.
- Retail sales growth

Reference Documents

BPACC Business Case (2020)

BPACC Economic Impact Analysis (2022)

Cultural Interpretation Strategy – Busselton Cultural Precinct (2020)

Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031 (2021)

SW Development Commission Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Accessibility Audit (2022)