



Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework

Prepared for the
City of Darebin

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1. Introduction

'85% of residents report public spaces, art works, and cultural infrastructure "make me feel happy to live in Darebin" '

Council Plan, 2017-2021

There is a growing understanding of the benefit that creative industries make to the economic prosperity, community vibrancy and overall liveability of a place. 'Creative Darebin', the Council's arts and culture strategy, establishes a clear mission to harness and cultivate these benefits:

'To create the ideal environmental conditions for creativity to thrive in our City'

It recognises that supporting this aspiration is the role of many Council departments who have not historically been associated with a cultural agenda. This Framework builds on this understanding. It focuses on the physical and digital spaces needed to create these ideal conditions and the role of the whole of Council in achieving this aspiration.

Purpose of the Framework

This Framework is needed to:

- Provide clear strategic direction on the delivery of creative and cultural infrastructure in the City of Darebin
- Establish a decision-making tool for Council to use to prioritise investment in Cultural and Creative Industries
- Embed cultural infrastructure into the larger program of city-shaping infrastructure planning for the City of Darebin
- Build a network of partners / supporters / champions for cultural and creative infrastructure delivery internally across the organisation and externally in the cultural and arts industries
- Establish a clear case for broader funding streams, including developer contributions

Method

The following methodological approach has been undertaken for this study:

Mapping of current creative and cultural infrastructure

A review of the current provision of arts infrastructure in Darebin (public and private) has been undertaken and mapped. Understanding the spatial distribution of creative industries can provide insights into the conditions that are required to make creative communities flourish. These conditions may be physical or non-physical. For example, a physical condition could be the provision of a space while a non-physical condition could be the provision of funding. Mapping is used as a form of research to understand spatial correlations, for example, the relationship between public transport and creative spaces. This identifies the range of creative spaces across the municipality and highlights current trends (strengths and gaps) in the provision of infrastructure that supports the creative and cultural sector. The immediate surrounding suburbs have been included in the infrastructure mapping. Data is not available for the number and location of individual, home-based studios and work spaces.

Research & review

A review of Council's existing policies and existing research has been undertaken, as well as a broad review of the economic, social and cultural benefits of investing in the arts. This has identified opportunities for enhancing opportunities for the creative and cultural sector to thrive.

Data analysis

Desktop review of CLUE data, Australian Business Register data and land valuation data

Figure 1: Spaces to create and display

Creative industry	Space to create	Space to display
Visual Arts	Artist studio	Galleries
Music	Music studio / rehearsal room	Bar / live music venue
Performing Arts	Community hall	Theatre
Film	Film studio	Cinema

Focus groups

Focus groups with internal representatives from Council and external representatives from the local arts community have been held to understand the specific issues and opportunities present within Darebin.

Internal engagement with Council officers occurred with the people who are likely to be using this plan. It was seen as critical that this study was informed by and developed with Council officers who will have responsibility in delivering the recommendations of the report going forward. This also enabled cross-organisational challenges in delivering creative and cultural infrastructure to be discussed and workshopped.

A focus group was held with artists representing a range of practices. This enabled some of the emerging ideas and strategic directions to be tested and ground-truthed with these creative practitioners, many of whom have a long association with the City of Darebin.

Community engagement will underpin the projects, actions and initiatives arising from this plan.

Definitions

The terms artist, creativity and culture are broad in scope. The following definitions have been adopted for this report.

Artist

A person who produces works in any of the arts. This can include professionals (their arts practice is central to their working life) and hobbyists.

Creative and cultural infrastructure

Infrastructure is the basic structure of an organisation or system which is necessary for its operation. In the context of this study, it is the physical spaces and digital platforms that support the creative and cultural industry.

Creative and cultural industry

Creative Victoria's definitions for creative and cultural industries have been adopted for this report. This includes the following sectors:

- Museums
- Environmental heritage
- Libraries and archives
- Literature and print media
- Performing arts
- Design
- Broadcasting, electronic or digital media or film
- Music composition and publishing
- Visual arts and crafts
- Fashion
- Cultural goods, manufacturing & sales
- Supporting activities

[Victorian Creative Industries Taskforce, 2015]

In addition, visual arts and crafts has been split into making spaces (studios) and exhibiting spaces (galleries).

An additional category, 'co-working spaces' has also been included. These spaces typically support a range of creative practitioners working across a variety of these sectors.

Creative practitioner

Individuals creating new and original work within any sector within the creative and cultural industry

Creative spaces

Creative spaces refers to a wide range of space at varying scales that support creative practitioners. In general, these spaces fall into two categories: spaces to make and spaces to exhibit or perform. Often one type of practice will need both types of spaces at different points in the creation of work as illustrated in figure 1.

2. The importance of creative and cultural industries to Darebin

Existing identified opportunities in Council Plan and Creative Darebin Arts Strategy

Opportunity 1: Reinivigation of Darebin Arts Centre (DAC)

Opportunity 2: Northland Urban Renewal Precinct

Opportunity 3: Renewed Developer Contributions Scheme

Opportunity 4: Significant infrastructure investment in Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre

Opportunity 5: Revitalisation of Central Preston

Opportunity 6: Activate vacant shopfronts and council facilities, including co-working in libraries

Key Council priorities

Council Plan

Council Plan 2017-2021 includes six goals that will drive overall Council activity for the next four years. Five of these have a direct relationship to the cultivation of a vibrant and prosperous creative and cultural industries sector:

Goal 2 We will improve the wellbeing of people in our community by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well

The arts provide direct benefits to the health and wellbeing of the community

Goal 3 We will ensure our planning system facilitates high-quality and sustainable development that extracts social, environmental and economic benefits for our community

The creation of new spaces that support creative and cultural industries can occur through the retrofitting of existing buildings, and through the inclusion of creative spaces into new development. Recent policy initiatives in central Melbourne have introduced incentives for developers to include creative spaces within their developments.

Goal 4 We will support and attract a diversity of local businesses and industries by fostering an environment in which they can thrive

40 percent of registered businesses in the City of Darebin work within the creative and cultural industries sector. Providing the infrastructure that they need is critical to ongoing economic activity and prosperity within Darebin.

Goal 3 We will lead on equity and recognise our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges

Participation in the arts assists in the cultivation of diverse and inclusive communities. The arts support social cohesion through opportunities to explore and understand diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Goal 6 We will be a leading, modern, and open council to meet our challenges, now and in the future.

Creativity is at the centre of open and progressive societies. Enhancing the role of creative and cultural practices in Darebin will assist in positioning Darebin as a forward-thinking and inclusive community.

Council's Big Actions relevant to creative infrastructure

- Renew the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre to give new life to a facility that supports the health and wellbeing of our community - \$50 million budget (Goal 2.2)
- Reinvigorate the Darebin Arts Centre - transforming it from a 'place to hire' to an Innovation centre for the arts (Goal 3.2 & 4.2)
- Create a developer contributions scheme to ensure developers contribute financially to our infrastructure as our population grows (Goal 3.1)
- Create a new suburb in Northland with new housing, public transport, business, employment opportunities, community facilities, creative spaces and open space (Goal 3.1)
- Use the opportunity created by the Victorian Government's removal of road and rail crossings to create more dynamic shopping strips, more open space and dramatically better city connectivity (Goal 3.1)
- Develop a plan for the revitalisation of central Preston incorporating housing, public transport, business, community facilities, creative spaces, open space and more attractive streetscapes (Goal 3.1)

Other relevant actions

(Goal 2.2) We will activate Darebin with arts and culture, making it more visible and encouraging a spread of activity across the municipality, throughout the calendar year, at all times of the day and night

- Increase and diversify audiences, supporting innovation in arts programming and maintaining high levels of satisfaction in festivals and events above 90%
- Grow the reach of the Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre

(Goal 3.2) We will support our creative industries to ensure the city grows as a significant arts and creative centre.

- Support a diversity of artists and creative organisations across all career stages and practices, through the provision of dedicated arts and cultural spaces locally and by creating diverse and flexible investment models and programs
- Ensure our art collections are available for the enjoyment of the community and future generations
- Maintain satisfaction with public arts and cultural infrastructure above 85%

(Goal 4.2) We will enable and activate space, including vacant shop fronts and council facilities, to accommodate different businesses and industries.

- Increase the number of vacant shops reactivated with creative businesses
- Re-purpose Council facilities to support business. For example, we have developed one of Australia's most successful local business incubators in a Council building, and we are exploring co-working in our libraries
- Transform the Darebin Arts Centre from a 'place to hire' to an innovation centre providing access to affordable, fit for purpose spaces for rehearsal, administration and co-working to suit a range of sectors

Creative Darebin: A Plan for thriving creative community

This Arts Strategy outlines clear goals for creating a city that supports its creative community. Key focus areas are:

- Inclusive - Increase access and meaningful participation in the arts for priority communities
- Enterprising - Make Darebin the home of choice for artists and creative industries
- Regenerative - Develop creative spaces and places
- Connected - Create connections across communities and between generations
- Vibrant and visionary - lead by example and commit to best practice principles

Tourism: A Destination Plan for Darebin

Darebin is known for having some of Melbourne's most eclectic and unique shopping and entertainment precincts. The local population of artisans, musicians, singers, songwriters, makers, creators and innovators are essential to keeping these precincts thriving and making Darebin a diverse and vibrant place.

This creative activity stimulates interest within and outside the Municipality. For example, Darebin's venues are host to a number of events that attract local and regional audiences. The increasing numbers of people attending publicly and privately owned venues leads to increased trade in hospitality, retail and local services sectors. Council's role is to support and assist tourism business to grow the local economy by attracting increased visitation. To this end, this Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework is directly aligned with Darebin's Tourism Strategy. Together they aim to ensure that Darebin continues to be the home of choice for arts and creative industries.

Economic value of the arts

The Australian economy is undergoing dramatic transformation from an 'old' model of growth based in industrial manufacturing to a 'new' model based on the knowledge sector, where research and innovation create significant value. Creativity is central to the generation of ideas and the creation of new products and markets. The recent review of Creative Industries in Victoria stated that 'Social and economic growth and prosperity are increasingly driven by the capacity of states and cities to renew themselves and diversify' (Victorian Creative Industries Taskforce, 2015, p11). They also point out that the creative and cultural industries are less vulnerable to digital disruption than other sectors: the contribution that they make to the resilience of the Australian economy is only likely to strengthen.

'A much greater proportion of the world's intellectual and creative resources are now being invested in the culture-based industries, whose largely intangible outputs are as 'real' and considerable as those of other industries. Human creativity and innovation, at both the individual and group level, are the key drivers of these industries, and have become the true wealth of nations in the 21st century'

Victorian economy

In 2013, Victoria's cultural and creative industries directly contributed \$22.7 billion to the Victorian economy in Gross Value Added (GVA). This was just behind manufacturing at \$26.3 billion and ahead of construction at \$19 billion. It represented 8% of Victoria's total economy. The value of cultural and creative exports, based primarily on services, was \$1.4 billion.

Darebin economic value

In 2016, Council commissioned a study into the investigation of economic value and social benefits of the arts and creative sector in the City of Darebin (See Geografia, 2016). This report highlighted the essential role that the creative industries sector plays in 'nation building' as it employs people, connects communities and adds intrinsic value to people's daily lives as much as an airport or a freeway.

This report identified the key contributions that the creative sector makes to Darebin's economic prosperity:

- 2,577 jobs (4.8% of all jobs in Darebin)
- \$436.2 million Gross Regional Product (7.5% of Darebin's economy)

The strongest contributors by defined creative and cultural industry categories were:

- Fashion
- Performing arts
- Design
- Visual arts and crafts

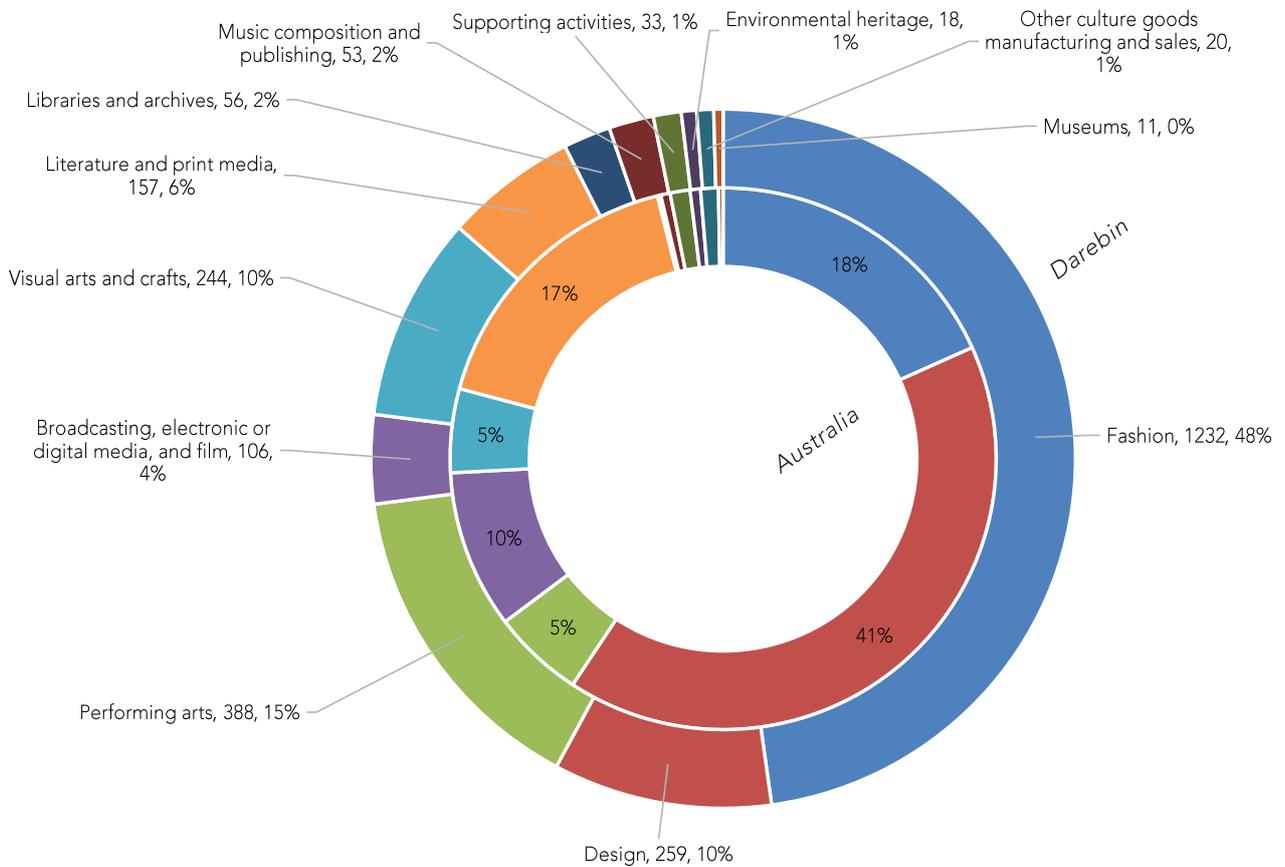


Figure 2: Arts and Creative Subsector Employment (2014). Source: Geografia

Approximately 40% of all businesses registered in Darebin are within the creative and cultural industries sector.

52% of businesses registered in Darebin are sole traders.

Almost the same number, 58% of registered businesses, operate from home. That's 6,805 out of the 11,732 registered businesses.

If 40% of these are working in the creative and cultural industry, that's 2,722 that don't have business infrastructure outside of their home that they can access.



Figure 3: Gertrude Contemporary, Preston.

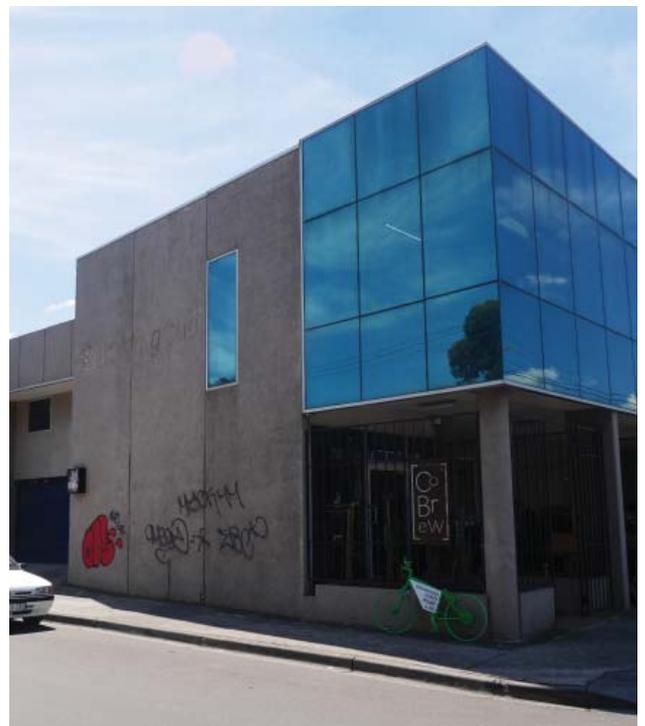


Figure 4: Three Ravens Brewery, Thornbury.

Darebin's changing economy

The Darebin economy is changing with small businesses increasingly setting up in the municipality. The number of businesses is growing, with strong growth in businesses not based in commercial premises (58% of businesses) (Council Plan 2017-2021).

There are 4,739 registered businesses in Darebin within the creative and cultural industry (ABR data, 2017) out of the total 11,732 registered businesses across the municipality (ID Consulting, 2017). The mix of these businesses is illustrated in figure 5.

This is significant and highlights the importance of focusing infrastructure provision on supporting small-scale creative businesses. The largest sectors were the combined trio of 'live music, visual arts, literature and print media', followed by 'design and fashion'.

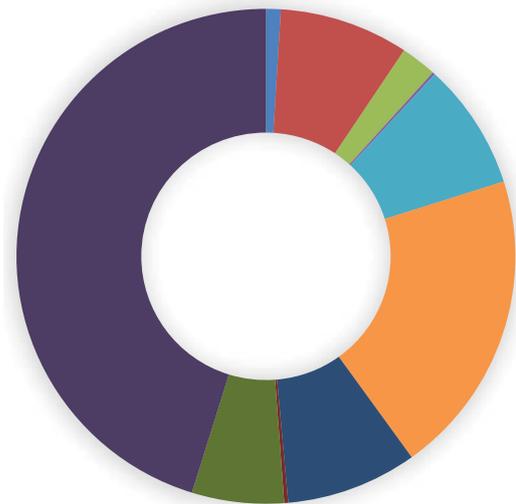


Figure 5: Registered businesses in Darebin split by creative industry category. Source: ABR data

- Literature and print media
- Broadcasting, electronic and digital media and film
- Music Composition and Publishing
- Libraries and Archives
- Design
- Design and fashion
- Visual Arts and Crafts
- Museums
- Live Music and Performing Arts
- Trio: live music, visual arts and literature and print media

Community health and wellbeing

Accessible community-based arts and cultural programs play an important role in creating positive social and physical environments where individuals and groups can thrive. A diverse number of health and social benefits stem from involvement in these activities. This involvement can either be active (sometimes referred to as “creative participation”) or passive, for example as an audience member (“receptive participation”), with both having recognised benefits at the individual and community level. This has led to the integration of arts and culture into national and international policy frameworks to support the health of the population, as well as to improve health outcomes in more vulnerable groups.

There are strong social values attached to the existence of arts and creative activity within the community. This can improve social connectedness, improve perceptions of community safety, decrease anti-social behaviour and provide opportunities for self-expression (Geografia, 2016).

Outlined below is a summary of the individual and social benefits of arts and cultural activities. While these are presented in three general domains, the benefits derived within one positively impact the other two.



Figure 6: The individual and social benefits of participating in arts and cultural activities

Individual well-being

Mental well-being

The benefits of arts and cultural programs arise through the creation of opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment, which can increase feelings of self-efficacy and self-worth. Participation builds self-esteem and confidence, as well as building social connections and developing a sense of belonging. The stronger a sense of belonging people have, the greater the benefits for both their mental and physical health. Both active and passive participation in arts and cultural programs have benefits on mental health and well-being. Involvement in creative programs is associated with decreased feelings of anxiety and depression (Cuypers, Krokstad et al. 2012). For men, low anxiety levels are more likely in those who engaged in passive rather than active creative cultural activities, while both active and passive participation reduce anxiety and depression in women (Cuypers, Krokstad et al. 2012).

In those with or recovering from mental illness, engagement with creative programs improves both psychological and social recovery (Van Lith, Schofield et al. 2013, Burns-Lynch, Brusilovskiy et al. 2016). Involvement in creative arts based programs is also effective in reducing psychological symptoms in refugee, immigrant and asylum-seeking children (Rousseau, Lacroix et al. 2005, Tyrer and Fazel 2014). The arts are an avenue for people to communicate and/or process their stories safely.

Social and emotional skills development

Participation in creative activities leads to increased recognition, understanding and differentiation of personal feelings, which leads to an increased ability to recognise feelings and empathise with others (Brouillette 2010). This improves social relationships with friends, family and co-workers (Barry, Clarke et al. 2017), leads to pro-social behaviour, increases tolerance and builds resilience (Schellenberg 2004, Romanowska, Larsson et al. 2013).

Physical well-being

Participation in arts and cultural programs is associated with improved general health outcomes. In a longitudinal study of more than 10,000 Swedish adults over 14 years, the likelihood of death within that period was reduced by 10% - 40% in those that engaged in the arts even after adjusting for other life factors that impact health, including age, education, physical exercise, chronic disease and smoking (Konlaan, Bygren et al. 2000). Perceptions of being in 'general good health' are more often reported in those who participate in arts and cultural programs. This relationship shows a dose-effect: the more often an adult participates in cultural activities, the greater their perceived health (Cuypers, Krokstad et al. 2012).

Cognitive health

The development of cognitive abilities in childhood through exposure to stimulating environments has been shown to have great benefits on health in adulthood (Power, 2006). Improvements in problem solving skills, visual-spatial abilities, IQ and overall school performance have been observed in those who engage in arts and cultural programs. In older adults and those with dementia, participation in creative programs can act as "brain training", resulting in improved attention and memory, communication and social interaction (Young, Camic et al. 2016). This is particularly relevant in aged populations, as cognitive health is a fundamental element of independent living and general health status.

Community and Social Cohesion

Social capital

A principle benefit arising from accessible arts and cultural programs is their ability to build social capital and a sense of community identity (Lowe 2000, Newman, Curtis et al. 2003). This occurs through understanding and celebrating the character of the community, which creates an enhanced sense of pride and social inclusion. Arts and cultural programs provide education about history and culture, and create opportunities for individuals to engage with their community, to be heard and to affect social change. This results in a stronger sense of local identity, community empowerment, increased awareness and will to take action on local issues, increased community organisational capacity and increased confidence and aspiration (Newman, Curtis et al. 2003). Together, these build social cohesion, connectedness and a sense of belonging, pride and social inclusion. It is well recognised that social capital influences physical and mental health outcomes (Allen, Balfour et al. 2014, Marmot and Allen 2014).

Sense of community

Participation in arts and cultural programs increases tolerance and acceptance of others, leads to embracement of diversity, blending of attitudes and free-expression. This enables bonds to be formed between people and groups, resulting in increased networking, civic engagement and enabling community improvements. Through the creation and strengthening of a sense of community, trust is formed between individuals and groups, which decreases feelings of individual vulnerability, ultimately increasing the resilience of individuals and the community.

Civic engagement

Creative programs increase civic engagement and promote volunteering, which, in turn, has a positive impact on individual self-confidence, self-esteem and well-being.

Social safety

The level of community and social cohesion, built through arts and cultural programs impacts on both objective and perceived levels of social safety. Engagement in arts and cultural programs decreases rates of anti-social behaviour and delinquency, while also reducing the perception of fear and anxiety as people feel more protected and less vulnerable (Ruijsbroek, Droomers et al. 2016). This in turn reduces stress levels and the perceived need to stay indoors to feel safe. These feelings increase the likelihood of engaging in physical activity and improve personal feelings of having good general health (Ruijsbroek, Droomers et al. 2016).

Life Satisfaction

Participation in the arts leads to higher life satisfaction (Australia Council for the Arts 2015). These include increased levels of enjoyment and happiness, increased quality of life, improved mood, general health and well-being. These benefits are reported from participants of all ages. For example, an 11-year-old participant in the Sistema Scotland Big Noise project, a program which offers free musical lessons to children, described her feelings about participation: "It makes me feel happy, happy like Christmas Eve" (Harkins, Garnham et al. 2016).

Loneliness and social isolation can reduce the quality of life, particularly for older people. Involvement with arts and cultural programs can reduce this perception of social isolation, improving mood and lowering levels of depression (Roe, McCormick et al. 2016). In older people with dementia, engagement in TimeSlips, a creative expression (story telling) program, provided feelings of meaningful involvement, and created a sense of anticipation, liveliness, laughter, and fun in participants (George and Houser 2014).

3. Understanding current provision, practices and needs

Additional opportunities identified through analysis of current creative spaces provision

Opportunity 7: Underutilisation of Council-run arts assets

Opportunity 8: Industrial zoning is supporting establishment of strong creative clusters and land value in industrial zoning is relatively lower than areas identified for residential growth

Opportunity 9: Significant number of vacant buildings

Council facilities

The City of Darebin owns and operates three arts venues.

Northcote Town Hall

The Northcote Town Hall incorporates the following spaces for hire:

- Main hall (flexible space - e.g. 400 seat theatre, 250 banquet function)
- West Wing Studio 1 (flexible space - e.g. 120 seat theatre, 70 banquet function, 160 cocktail function)
- West Wing Studio 2 (flexible space - e.g. 80 seat theatre, 70 banquet function)
- 6 meeting rooms ranging in size from approximately 18m² to 70m². The three largest rooms can accommodate a 60 seat theatre or 20-30 people boardroom. Two of these rooms can join together to create one larger space.
- Rooftop function space
- 4 kitchens (one of them being commercial)

The use of these spaces varies considerably and includes arts-based activities such as festivals, exhibitions, performances, developments, forums and rehearsals. The wide range of other uses includes government (Australian Electoral Commission and local council), community events (special interest group and health and leisure workshops and classes, cooking classes, music classes, meetings, funerals, weddings, parties), religious services, business retail (workshops, markets, filming), education (performances, exams, fundraisers, exhibitions).

A 2013 review of the Northcote Town Hall business model considered the current operating model and considered a Creative Tenancy model (long term rental to resident arts companies).

Darebin Arts Centre (DAC)

DAC incorporates the following spaces for hire:

- Large foyer
- Five multi-purpose rooms ranging in size from approximately 45m² to 180m²
- Theatre with fixed seating (maximum of 385 people)
- Exhibition space approximately 65 m²
- Commercial kitchen

The use of the spaces are varied and include arts activities such as festivals, forums, exhibitions and performances (primarily using the theatre and exhibition spaces). They also include a wide range of non-arts based activities, including community events (such as sports classes, meetings and parties), education (exams, school performances), retail/ business (workshops, markets and filming), council activities (internal workshops, festivals), which occur primarily in the foyer and multi-purpose spaces.

DAC is set back from the street with a large at-grade car park separating the entrance from Bell St and St Georges Road. This is a significant opportunity to redesign the centre to improve its relationship with the street and it's prominence, and to capitalise on this underutilisation of land in a growing suburb.

Both Northcote Town Hall and DAC represent an underutilisation of these spaces for creative uses.

Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre

Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre operates as a contemporary art gallery and includes a number of small-medium sized gallery spaces. The public art gallery hosts free contemporary visual arts exhibitions, a public program including artist talks, workshops and events, and the biennial Darebin Art Prize.



Darebin Arts Centre (DAC)



Northcote Town Hall



Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre

Range of spaces

Overall there are 172 creative spaces identified in Darebin. They include:

- Visual arts and crafts - exhibition - 34
- Visual arts and crafts - studios - 16
- Performing arts - 22
- Music composition and publishing - 17
- Museums - 1
- Libraries and archives - 8
- Fashion - 7
- Design - 34
- Broadcasting, electronic or digital media or film - 10
- Cultural goods, manufacturing and sales - 4
- Supporting activities - 8
- Co-work spaces - 11

Geographical trends

Importance of public transport and High Street

A significant number of creative spaces are found along High Street in Northcote, Thornbury and Preston. This includes performance spaces (typically live music venues), co-work spaces, design and gallery spaces. These are spaces where direct access to public transport is key and that naturally fit within activity centre destinations where direct access to markets (audiences and customers) are critical.

'Dispersed clusters' of creative spaces

The importance of clustering of creative activities is acknowledged in Council's arts strategy, 'Creative Darebin'. The more opportunities that can be provided for artists to network and share knowledge the more the creative community can be strengthened. Digital spaces and physical spaces for people to meet face to face are critical to supporting a strong network of creative industries.

'As part of the knowledge economy, the Arts and Creative sector thrives in an ecosystem with diverse input and density of activity. Not surprisingly, then, it is concentrated in inner urban areas, including the City of Darebin, which has a relatively dense urban form and a remarkably diverse community.'

(Geografia, 2016)

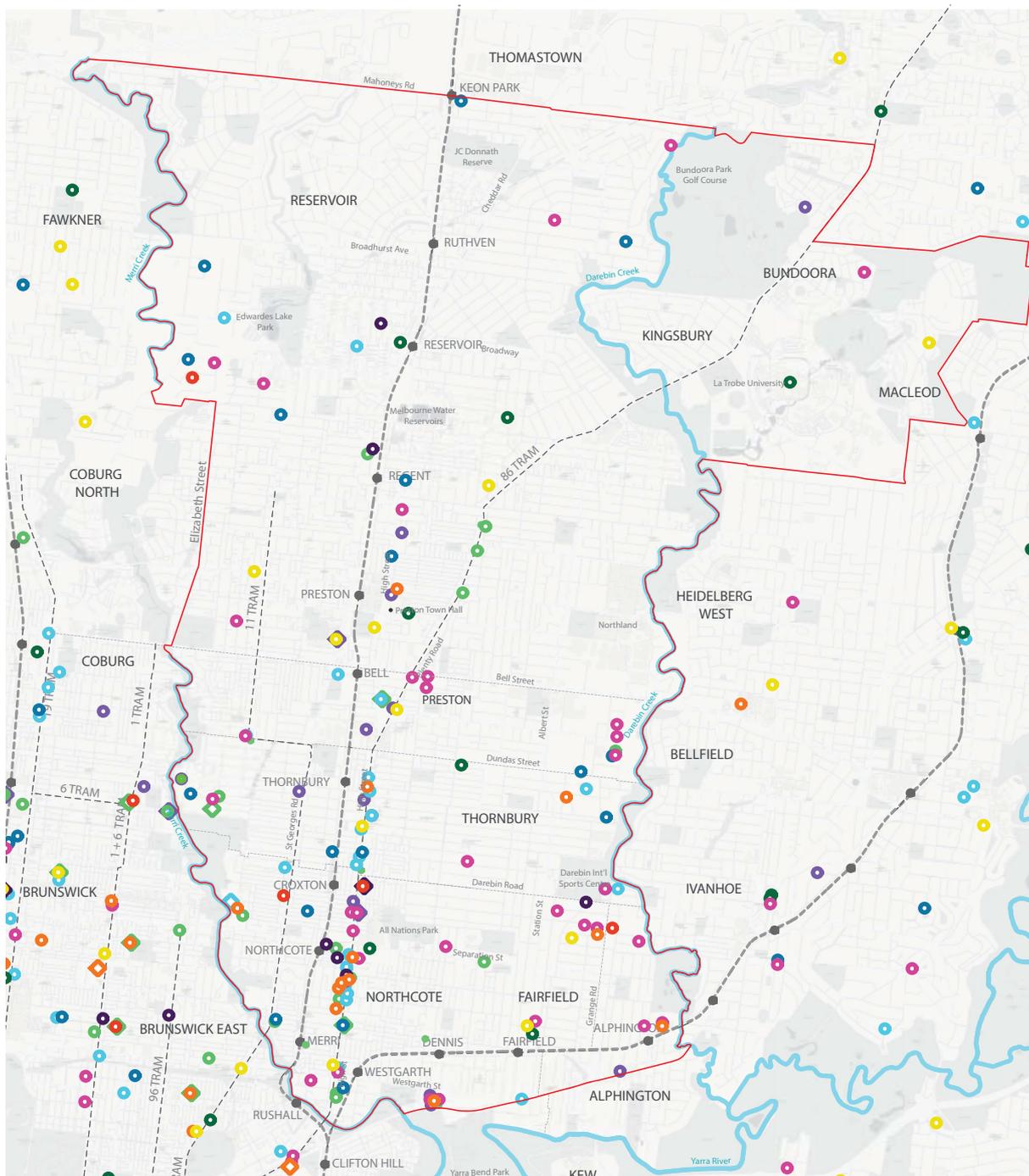
As well as clusters along High Street, there are a mix of strong and emerging clusters found within the industrial precincts.

Greatest levels of activity are within the southern end of the municipality

Overall the greatest number of creative spaces is found in the southern half of the municipality (generally south of Bell Street). Spaces dedicated to the performing arts, studios, co-working and design are fewer in the north compared to the south.

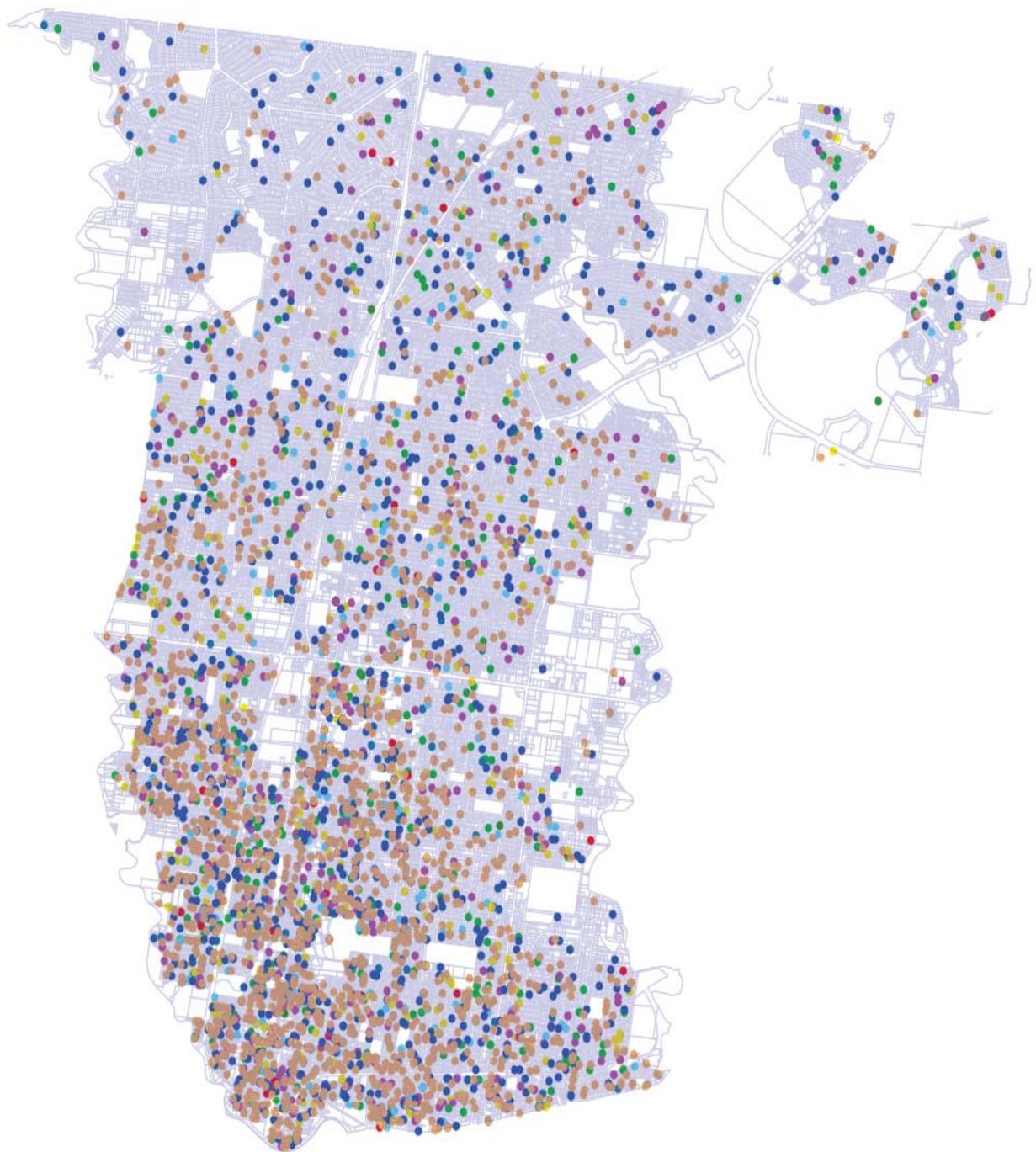
This is evident also in the location of businesses registered in the municipality.

Creative spaces across all categories in Darebin and surrounding suburbs



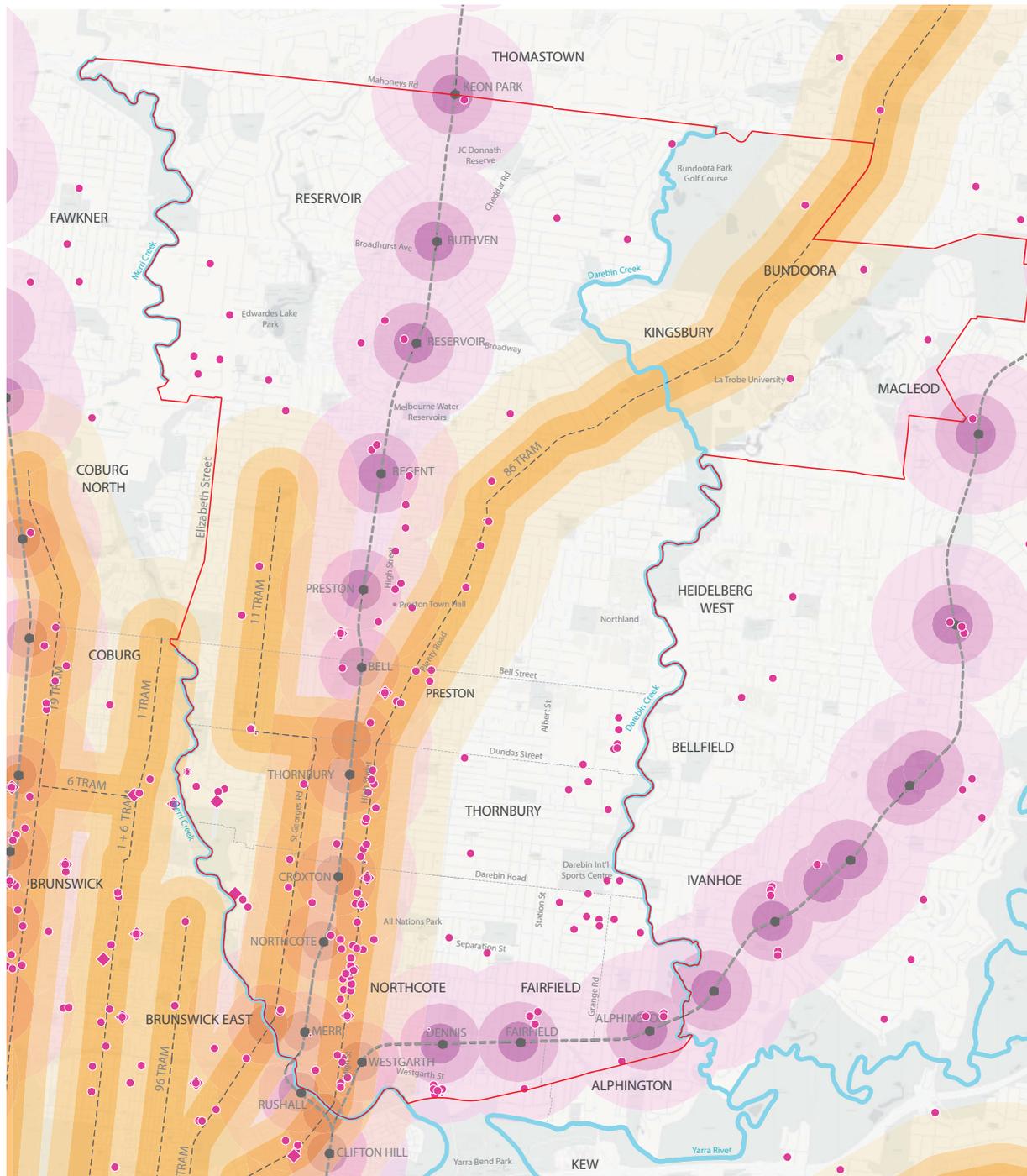
- Museums
- Libraries and archives
- Performing arts
- Design
- Broadcasting, electronic or digital media or film
- Music composition and publishing
- Visual arts and crafts: gallery
- Visual arts and crafts: studios
- Fashion
- Cultural goods, manufacturing and sales
- Supporting activities
- Co-work spaces

Registered businesses in Darebin in the creative and cultural industries



- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| ● Museums - 12 | ● Broadcasting, electronic or digital media or film - 398 | ● Design & Fashion - 946 |
| ● Libraries and archives - 8 | ● Music composition and publishing - 110 | ● Literature and print (publishing) - 45 |
| ● Performing arts - 283 | ● Visual arts and crafts:photography - 403 | ● Live music, visual arts, literature and print media - 2142 |
| ● Design - 392 | | |

Relationship between creative spaces and public transport



Graded colours represent 200, 400 and 800m distance from tram lines and train stations

● Creative and cultural infrastructure

The importance of the industrial zoned areas

There is a strong relationship between the industrial zoned areas and clusters of creative spaces. 'Such zones have the right mix of older, low rent buildings with suitable roof height and truck access, and host many like-minded micro-enterprises who cannot afford commercial rents in standalone buildings.' (Urban Cultural Policy and the Changing Dynamics of Cultural Production: Made in Marrickville, 2017). Land valuations between mixed use and industrial areas are significantly different.

The Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy (DELUS) identifies three core industrial areas that should be retained for industrial uses (see opposite for area locations):

- Reservoir - (Area 1)
- East Preston (south of Bell Street) - (Area 2)
- Fairfield - (Area 3)
- Anderson Road - (Area 4)

Areas recommended for consideration for intensive mixed use development include:

- East Preston (north of Bell to Gower Street) - (Area 5)
- Beavers Road (noting that employment should continue to play a key role) - (Area 6)
- Various small pockets and single industrial sites scattered across Darebin (again, noting that where appropriate, the recommended alternative use includes employment) - (Arthurton Road Area 7A, Heidelberg Road and Westfield Streets Area 7B)

Areas 6, 7A and 7B contain strong clusters of creative spaces.

While the highest contributing economic sector is fashion and the highest number of infrastructure items is in design, the number of cultural goods manufactured in Darebin is very low. This represents a potential opportunity to create genuine making spaces in Darebin's industrial areas.

Creative spaces in highest need

The following 6 priority needs have been identified through mapping, research and consultation.

I. Large number of affordable making spaces suitable for a wide range of practices with secure tenure

The highest priority is for affordable spaces across all practices and locations to support a broad range of arts practices.

II. Protect and cultivate live music venues

Live music venues are vulnerable to closure when located in close proximity to residential developments.

III. Live-work spaces & affordable housing

It is important to consider not just the working lives of artists & creatives but to make sure that they are able to live close to their workplaces. Artists are part of the community, not separate to it.

IV: Subsidised rehearsal spaces

There is need for spaces suitable for a wide range of performances, but particularly accommodating small to medium performing arts organisations and community groups

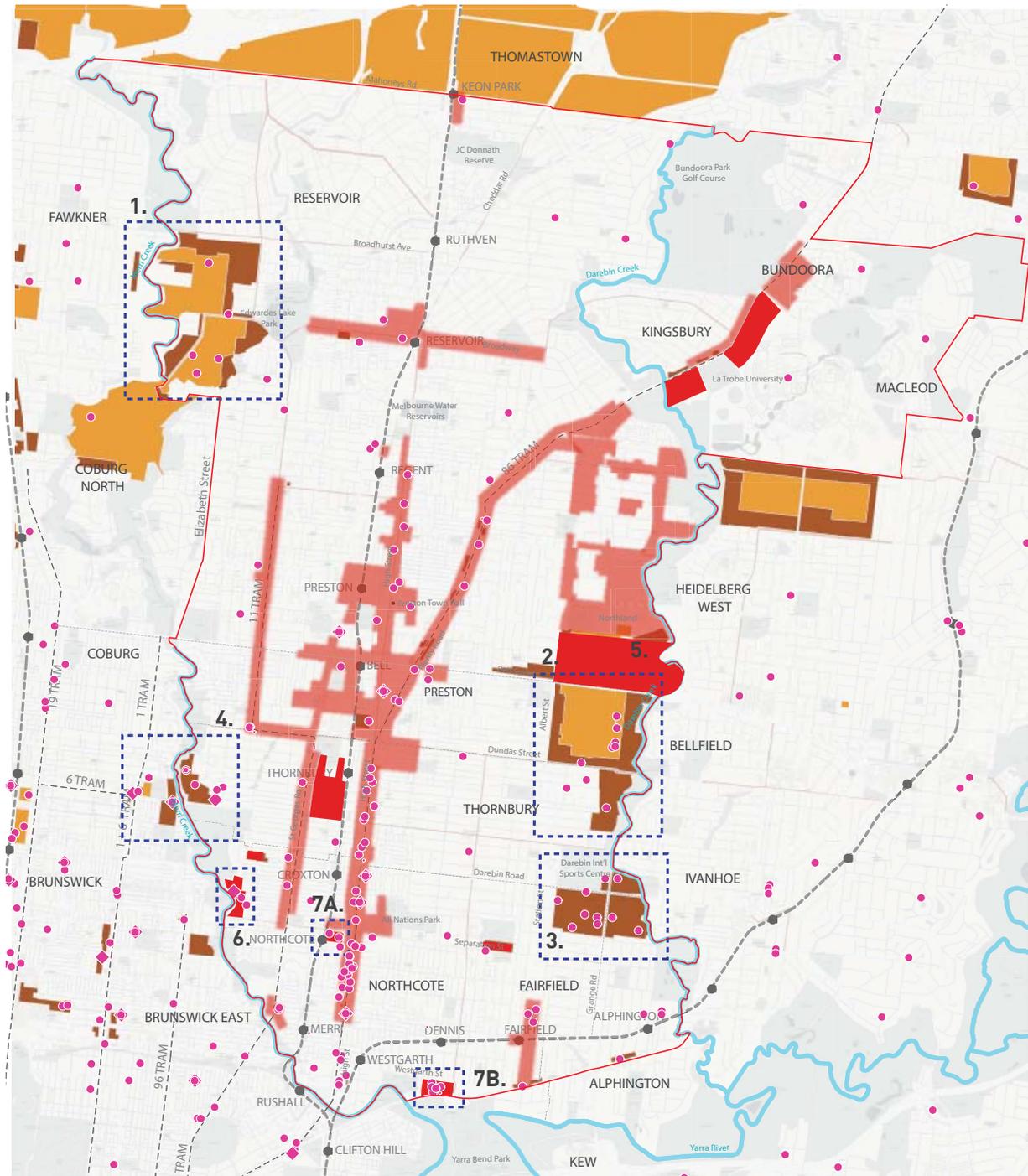
V: Greater diversity and provision of creative spaces in the middle and north of municipality

In particular, the need for studio spaces, performing arts, design, visual arts - exhibition spaces and supporting activities which are all lacking in the north.

VI. Co-working spaces

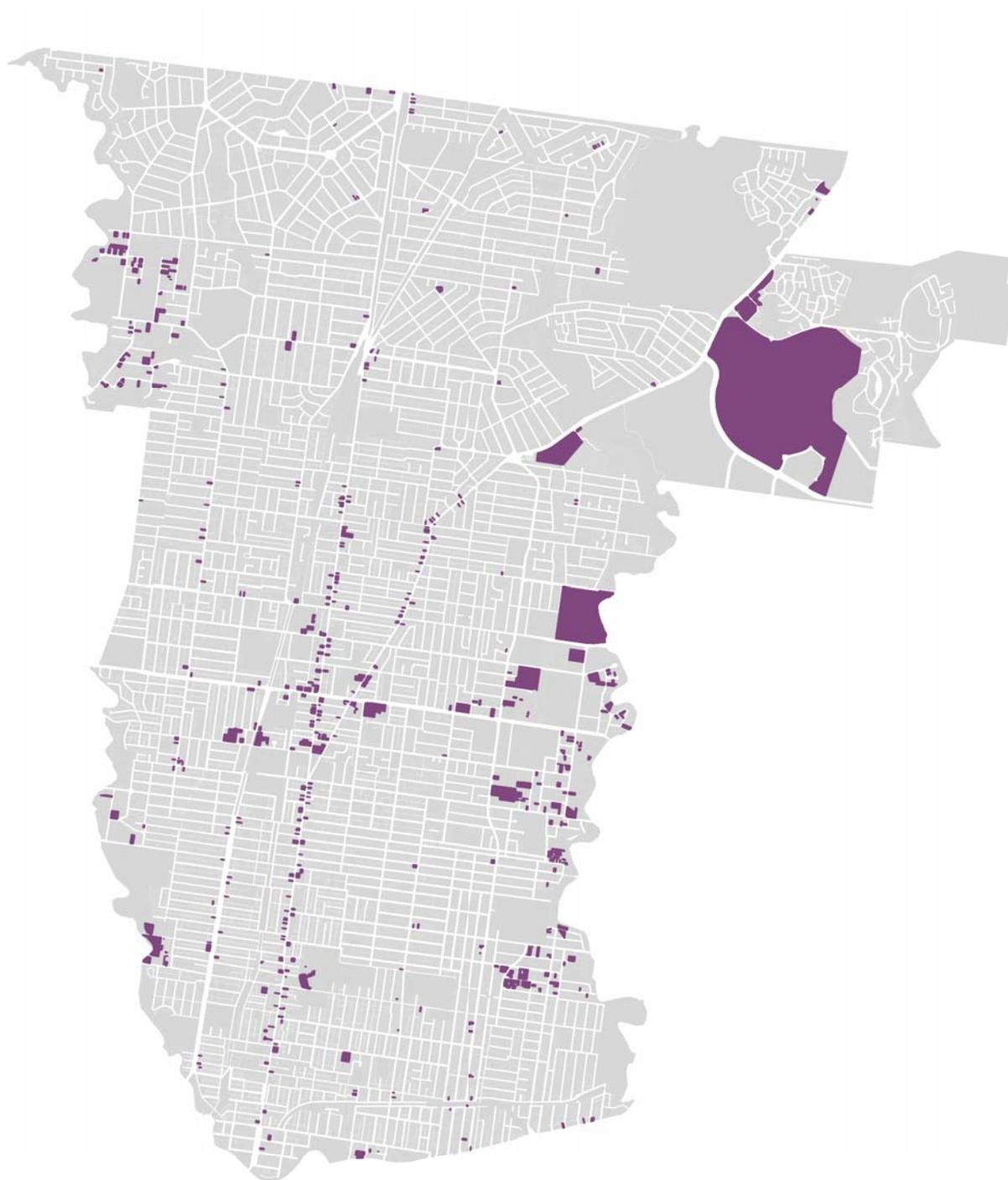
A significant number of registered businesses across the municipality are located within residential areas. Opportunities for these businesses to expand will require affordable, small-scale and distributed spaces for people to work. This is likely to be across a wide range of creative practices, but particularly focused on desk-based work which are suitable to co-working spaces.

Relationship between creative spaces and existing and proposed land uses

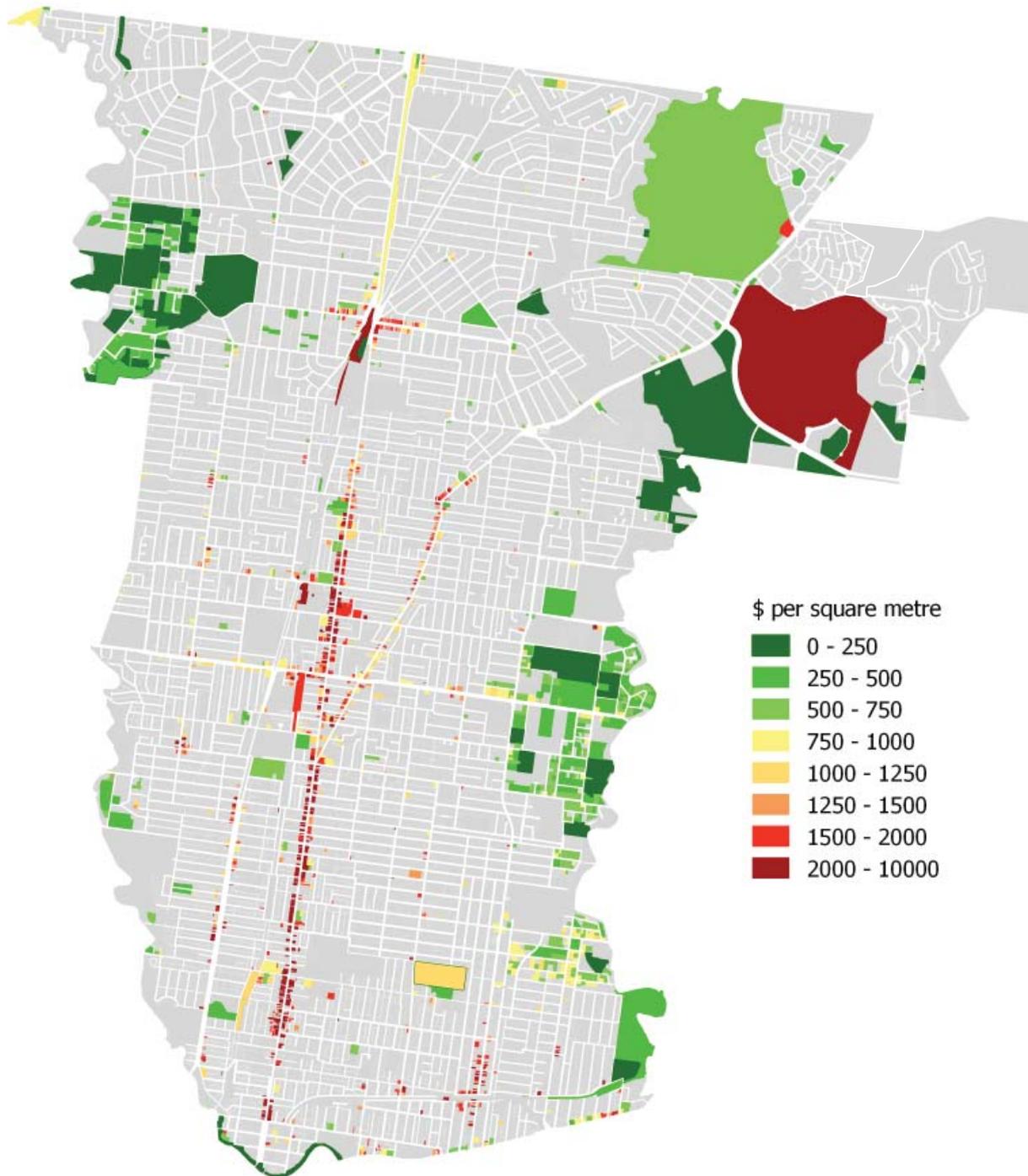


- Industrial zoning to be retained
- Industrial areas proposed for rezoning to allow mixed-use
- Existing high growth areas
- Creative and cultural infrastructure

Vacant spaces



Land valuations - 2016



4. Vision for delivering creative infrastructure

All creative industry practitioners (established and emerging) can find the spaces, facilities and networks that they need to flourish in their preferred form of cultural or creative expression and for the broader community to feel part of Darebin's creative community.

The workshops identified the following five aspirations for cultural and creative infrastructure in Darebin:

- To increase the number of spaces to support broad practices of creativity (focus on making spaces)
- Deliver fit-for-purpose facilities that support varying scales of creative practices and career paths (nurture emerging, experimental artists through to celebrated and established artists)
- Secure long-term affordability for creative practitioners
- To raise the profile of Darebin as a 'host' and enabler of creative practices
- That Melbourne's north is known for its thriving creative and cultural industries sector

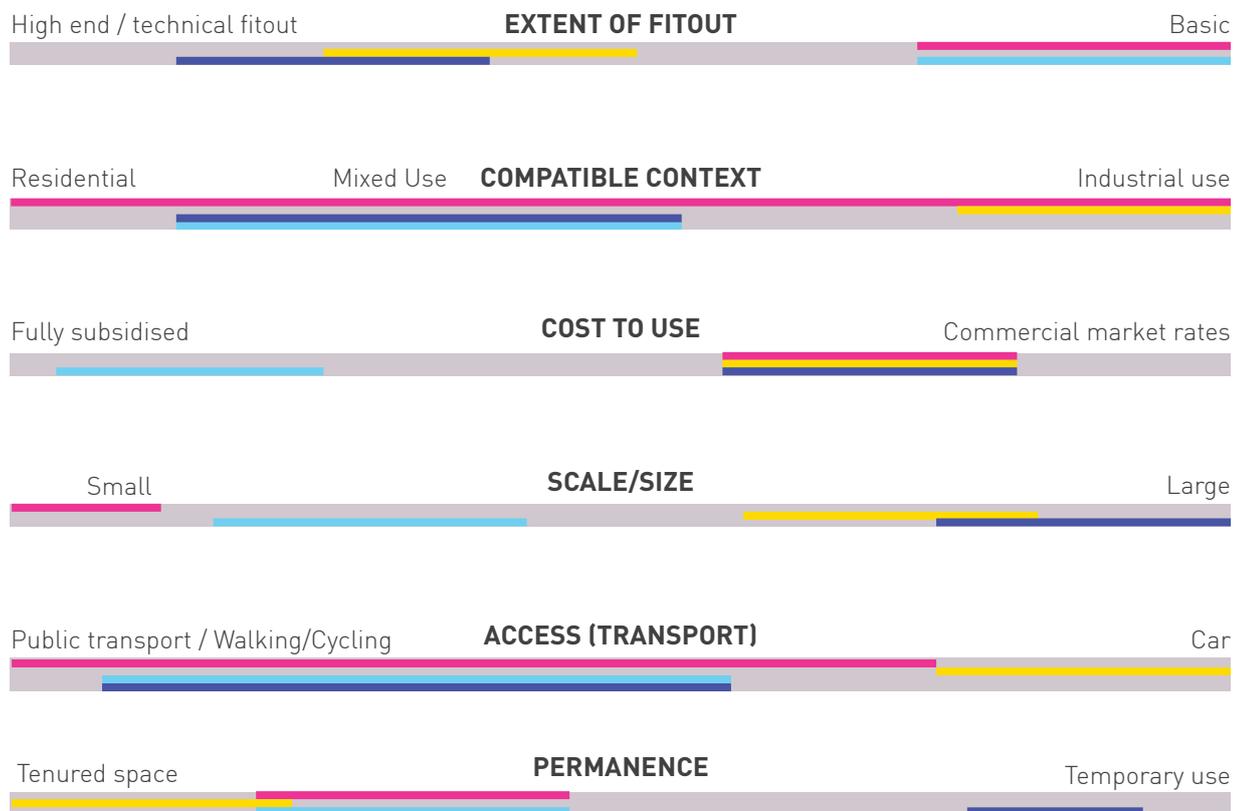
Together they articulate a desire for Darebin to be celebrated as a centre of creative activity within Melbourne and Australia because of the artists and creative communities that choose to work and live there. It acknowledges that artists are central to the creation of an authentic, grounded energy and community identity.

The workshops highlighted the diversity of practitioners in Darebin and the wide ranging needs of various artists. This was explored for three types of arts practice: a visual artist working at a small-scale, e.g. a painter), a community choir and a commercial industrial designer and fabricator. Figure 4 is a conceptual framework developed by Council officers that demonstrates the varying needs of each artist. For example, the visual artist is likely to only need a basic fitout and their space requirements will be small, say 20m². Their practice is compatible with a wide range of neighbours, from residential through to industrial. Public transport access is likely to be important and some degree of permanence will be desired.

This varies significantly to a commercial industrial designer and fabricator. In this instance, a more technical fitout will be required that considers issues such as noise and dust and accommodates heavy machinery. It is unlikely that their practice will be compatible with residential uses. Considering the need to invest more heavily into the fitout, longer term tenure is likely to be more important. Vehicle access to support the movement of large-scale materials and works will be critical.

The community choir’s needs will vary between their rehearsals and their performance schedules. Ongoing access to an affordable rehearsal space will be important, while temporary use of a performance space that includes a higher quality acoustic fitout will be desired.

Understanding the varying needs of artists



Example 1: Visual artist (small scale, eg painter)

Example 2: Commercial industrial designer and fabricator

Example 3A: Community choir (rehearsal space)

Example 3B: Community choir (performance space)

Figure 4: There is no one size fits all. The creative ecosystem needs to support a wide range of practices working in a variety of ways, spaces and places.

5. Strategic Directions

1. Maximise capacity of existing Council assets, investment and resources to deliver the Vision

1A. Dedicated arts venues

The City of Darebin owns significant cultural assets including the Northcote Town Hall, Darebin Arts Centre and the Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre. These are arts venues that provide spaces for artists to primarily perform or exhibit their work. They provide limited capacity for 'making spaces' (with some provision for rehearsal space only).

DAC and Northcote Town Hall also cater to a wide range of community uses for classes, meetings and other events which is an underutilisation of the significant financial investment which has been made in fitting out these venues with the equipment needed to support professional performances.

The following key strategic objectives are proposed:

Northcote Town Hall

- Capitalise on the existing investment into Northcote Town Hall by repositioning its role from a 'community venue for hire' to a premier dedicated arts hub.

Darebin Arts Centre

- Retain the potential for large-scale performance spaces, however significantly enhance the use of DAC to support the making of new work
- Consider redevelopment of DAC car park. This could incorporate live-work spaces to maximise the opportunity to make this a 24 hour creative hub and provide affordable housing for artists.

Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre

- Continue the role of Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre as a dedicated contemporary arts space.

1B. Other community hubs and libraries

Explore opportunities to expand cultural programming through other community facilities, e.g. existing libraries.

Explore opportunities for underutilised Council sites for arts activation, e.g. underutilised car parks which could house pop-up temporary spaces and other Council facilities.

1C. Invest in the arts through Council's broader investment in infrastructure

Council is planning significant investment in community facilities, e.g. the Northcote Aquatic Centre. Bringing artists in to work on these projects does not need to add cost. Early collaboration can identify ways to incorporate artwork into elements of these facilities that would have been delivered as part of the whole design project.

1D. Utilise existing Council resources to improve the visibility of creative industries to their audiences and markets

- Engage with and profile Darebin's artists through Council publications and digital platforms (even if it's about them doing work elsewhere).
- Utilise Council's websites and publications to promote and build audiences for local artists.
- Continue to host and enable creative and cultural sector networking opportunities locally.

2. Protect new and cultivate existing live music venues

Support and protect the role of the creative High Street for live music venues through practical measures that focus on attenuating the sound at its source and through requirements for new development to provide sound attenuation for residential uses.



Northcote Social Club, High Street, Northcote

3. Protect, nurture and enhance the emerging creative clusters in industrial precincts in the south

3A Industrial areas

- Support the retention and expansion of the emerging clusters of creative industries in four existing industrial areas: East Preston (south of Bell), Fairfield, Reservoir and Anderson Road.

3B Special Use Zone

- Support the continuation of creative spaces in Heidelberg Road and Westfield Streets, Arthurton Road (e.g. Artery), Beavers Road through piloting a Special Use Zone that includes specific provisions to support these uses. This is important to generate new economic activity that is still commercially focused (including industrial) but that includes mixed-use development in line with the overall strategic objectives for these areas.



East Preston industrial precinct



Anderson Road precinct

Case study: Artist's studios

Opportunity: Whole municipality



Image source: <http://www.acoop.com.au>

Artery Cooperative, Northcote

Artery Cooperative is a not-for-profit organisation that was established by a group of RMIT fine arts students in 2001. The organisation has 19 members and five-board members and manages a large studio space on Helen Street in Northcote. Their mission is 'to provide a safe and well-resourced working environment for artists that enables the exploration and exchange of ideas, knowledge and skill'. Members are provided with the opportunity to share in the equity of their work environment, a share of which they can purchase in a lump sum or through incremental monthly fees. This member capital is used to fund the purchase of property and to maintain an extensive selection of tools and equipment. In 2012, after 11 years of operation, Artery was in a stable enough position to purchase a studio at 101 Helen Street.

4. 'Plug the gap' in the provision of creative spaces in the North through creation of a new creative arts hub in Reservoir

4A Reservoir Arts Hub

- Establish an arts hubs in Reservoir to address locational gaps in co-working, performing arts (rehearsal) and studio spaces.

4B Creative industries in Reservoir

- Harness creative industries to rejuvenate Reservoir and support its evolution as a creative, community focused place.
- Incorporate requirement for development contributions for this hub which will have the broadest community participation.

'Things that grow from the ground are more likely to thrive.'

Artist, consultation 2017

Case study: Live-work spaces

Opportunity: DAC (Council delivered/partnerships)
+ NURP (Developer delivered)



Image source: <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/explore/arts-and-culture/opportunities-for-artists/creative-space/creative-live-work-spaces#&gid=1&pid=6>

Live/work residency, Sydney

The City of Sydney opened its first creative live/work residency program in 2013. This gave artists the opportunity to acquire a 12-month affordable lease in the centre of the city on William Street. Since then, the six 1-bedroom apartments have provided working studios to a new suite of artists each year. Artists currently working and living in the space include a dancer, a performance artist, a musician and radio broadcaster. Following the success of the William Street program, a new project is underway for a creative live/work space in Waterloo located on the Waterloo library grounds.

5. Maximise opportunities for the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct to contribute to the growth of the creative and cultural industries sector

NURP represents Council's most significant opportunity to establish planning controls that can support the delivery of creative spaces and a creative community. The following suite of planning initiatives are proposed:

5A Live-work spaces

- Deliver live-work spaces within NURP - incorporate incentives into new planning controls to ensure that this is delivered.

5B Arts hub

- Deliver a new arts hub which will be pivotal to supporting the delivery of creative industries. Incorporate requirement for developer contributions for this hub which will have broadest community participation.

5C Inclusionary zoning

- Incorporate broader requirements for affordable housing to support the overall provision within the municipality.

5D Developer incentives

- Introduce incentives that encourage developers to deliver a broad range of creative spaces within their development.

5E Trial projects

- Undertake transitional trial projects to showcase the long term viability of creative industries in this precinct.

6. Ensure planning policy settings and statutory planning practices support the creative and cultural industries sector

6A Statutory planning assistance

Creative practitioners frequently are required to apply for planning approval to establish their spaces. This can require significant resources, particularly for those with no experience in statutory planning and development.

Providing material (such as fact sheets) which could assist applicants in understanding the process would facilitate the creation of new spaces.

6B Developer contributions

- Advocate to the state government for inclusion of cultural and creative infrastructure in the final definitions for community infrastructure as defined in the Infrastructure Contributions Plans.
- Incorporate developer contributions for two creative hubs at Reservoir and within NURP.

7. Position Council to have a proactive, facilitating role in the delivery of creative spaces

7A Establish a proactive approach

Be ready to respond to strategic opportunities as soon as they arise that may offer support for creative industries. These could include large scale public or private projects, e.g. Level Crossing Removal Project.

7B Facilitate use of vacant spaces

Continue the existing successful initiatives such as 'Active Spaces' to provide direct support for the establishment of new creative spaces within existing retail areas and expand program to include identified industrial clusters.

7C Facilitate creation of new spaces by being a source of valuable knowledge

Establishing a creative space typically comes with initial setup costs such as bringing spaces up to meet building codes, installing fit-outs, establishing business operation systems and marketing. This is often the biggest hurdle to the creation of new spaces.

Council has demonstrated the benefit of providing valuable advice through the Creative Spark program. Expanding this to include advice in regards to building permits and planning permits would enhance this service.

7D Build capacity internally

Build internal capacity of the organisation to be responsive to a dynamic and fast changing creative sector.

8. Work with the private sector to increase the supply of creative spaces

8A Facilitate creative spaces in new developments

Maximise opportunities for provision of creative spaces within private development through redevelopment opportunities

What baffles me with these new apartment developments, is they'll happily make space for a convenience store or a cafe. Why isn't there space for something different? An art space, a woodworking school, could be a real destination for people. Why can't we have provision for another space?

Woodworker, Carrington Road, Made in Marrickville
This report investigated the Carrington Road industrial precinct in Sydney's inner west which the NSW State government is considering for rezoning for mixed use development. It argues that planners must understand that this will lead to the loss of makers and artist spaces that are currently clustered together and thriving in this area. This will have significant impact on the economic and cultural vitality of Sydney's inner west.

8B Facilitate use of current vacant spaces prior to redevelopment

Investigate opportunities to expand provision of creatives spaces in Darebin through the temporary re-use of existing vacant spaces that are scheduled for redevelopment. This will require a proactive approach to identify and work together with developers to deliver this outcome.

9. Activate Darebin’s public realm through the arts to contribute to place-making

The following objectives have been identified:

9A Public art

Adopt a curatorial approach to the delivery of public art through Darebin’s public realm, with a focus on activity centres, open spaces and waterways

9B Artist involvement

- Require the involvement of artist(s) in capital works projects over a certain scale or budget (see case study below)
- Utilise artists in Council’s capital works programme for new investment in the public realm and upgrades, e.g. for lighting, furniture and other landscape features

This could play a particularly strong role in the revitalisation of Preston Central.

10. Advocate for affordable housing provision

Focus opportunities for affordable housing in growth areas through revised housing stress policy.

11. Work with neighbouring councils to advocate for a thriving ‘creative north’

Taking a regional response to the provision of creative spaces would enable the aspirations of the greater creative community to be represented. This may enable practical delivery of initiatives through shared resourcing and can connect these initiatives to broader investment in the region, e.g. tourism investment.

Case study: incorporating artists into infrastructure delivery

Opportunity: Direct capital investment

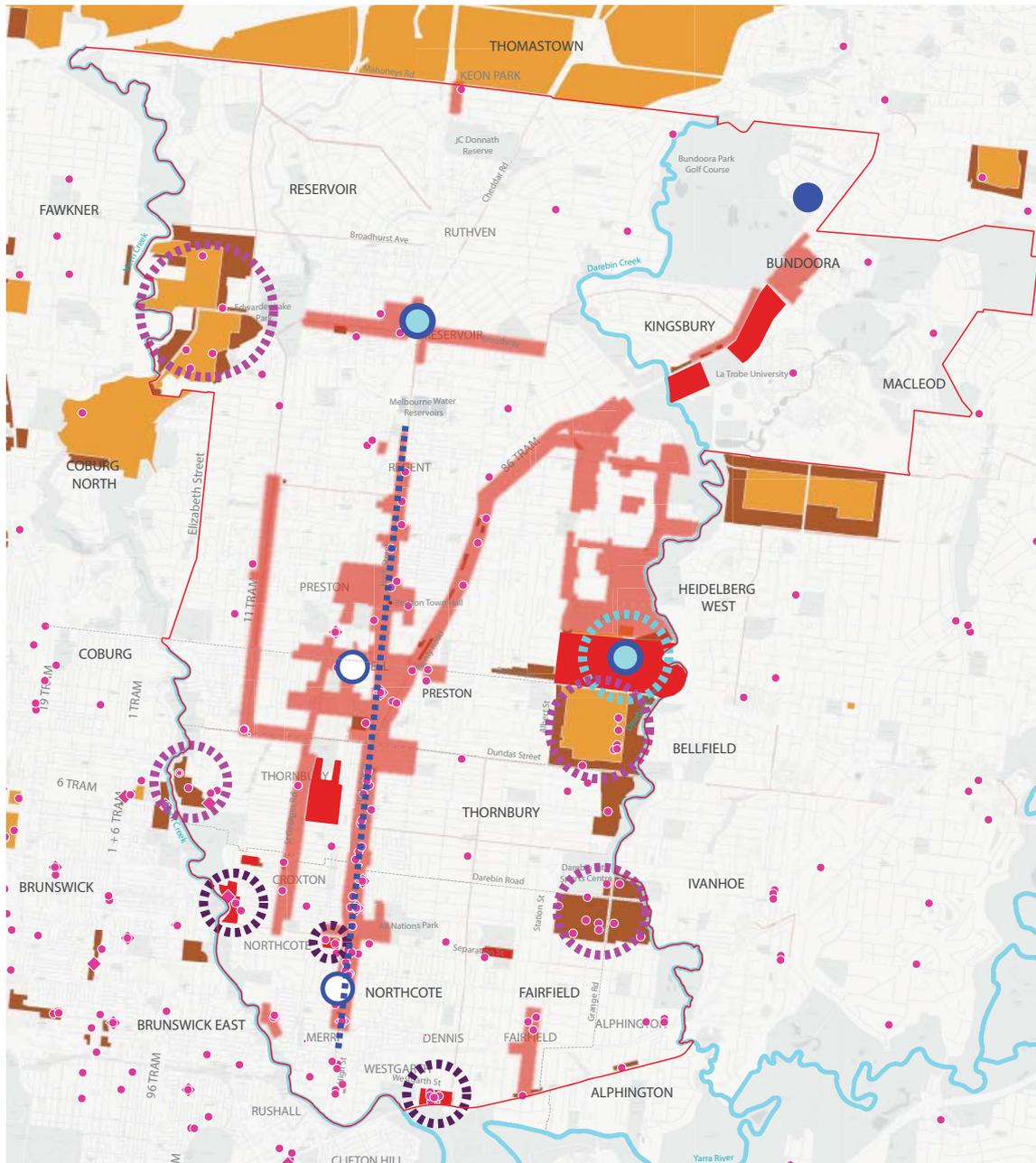


Image source: Hassell Landscape Architecture

Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre Playspace

One of the aims of the development of an Indigenous themed, innovative play space at the front of the facility (not within the heritage listed grounds) is to demonstrate a new kind of play space where artistic concept is of as high a value as the physical or visual amenity. Key requirements of the tender were that the project included collaboration with an Indigenous artist, that the artist was paid and that the artistic concept was incorporated into the final design and reflected an Indigenous voice. Hassell Landscape Architects and Indigenous artists Steaphan Paton are working together. The concept is in draft stage.

Summary of key initiatives



-  Retention of creative clusters (no rezoning)
-  Pilot project - rezone to Special Use Zone
-  NURP - Creation of live-work spaces
-  Re-purposed / enhanced arts hubs
-  New Arts hub
-  Arts hub - continuing role
-  Protection for High Street live music spine

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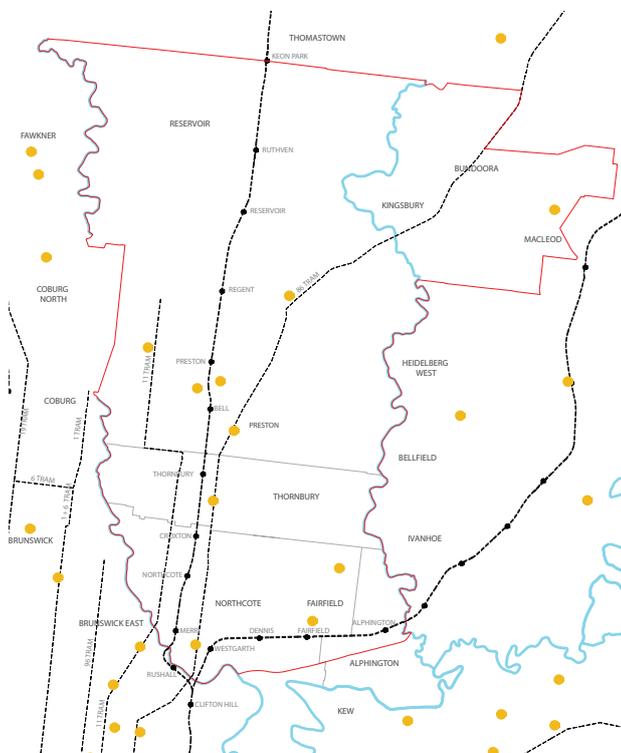
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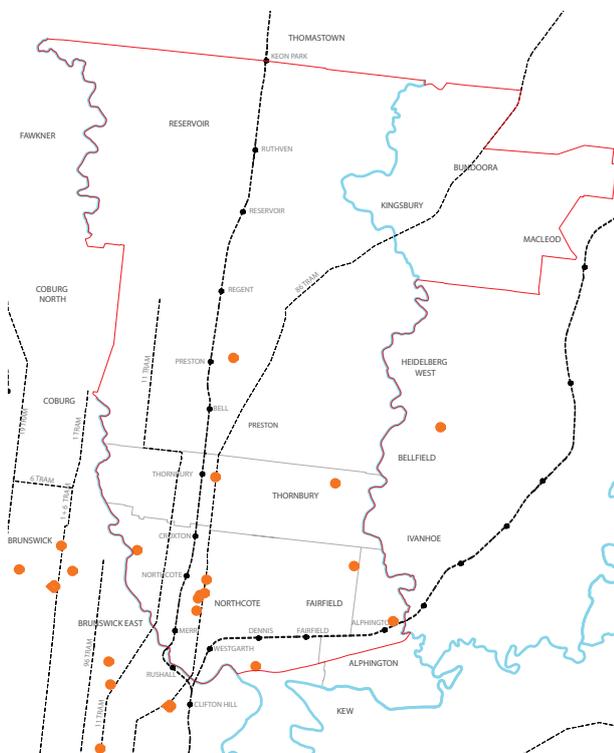
Appendix A: Creative spaces by category



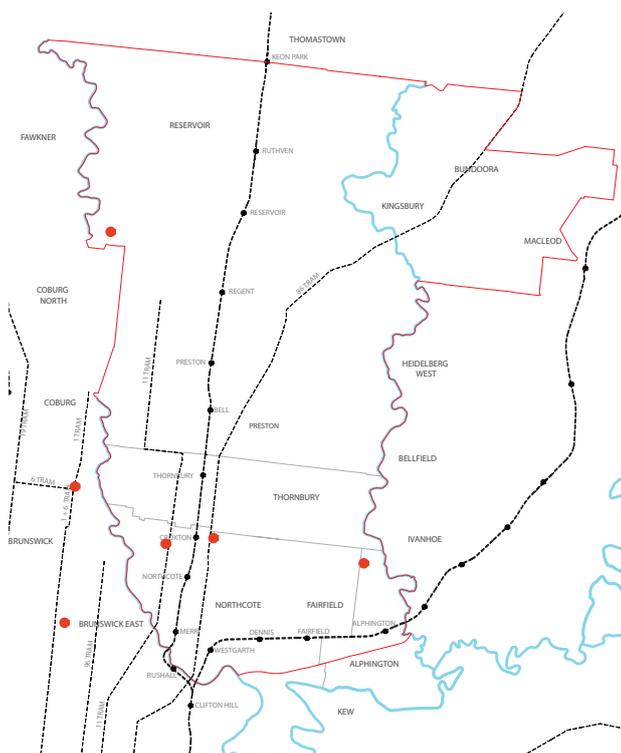
Broadcasting, Electronic or Digital Media or Film



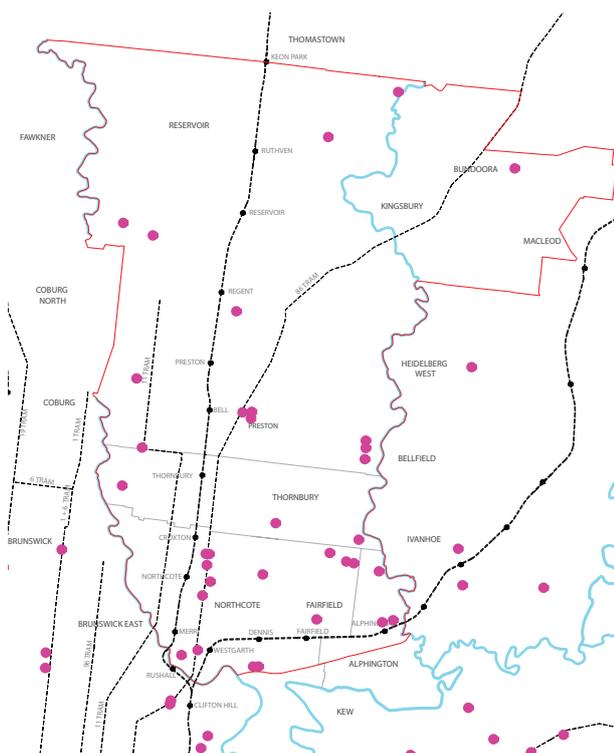
Co-Work



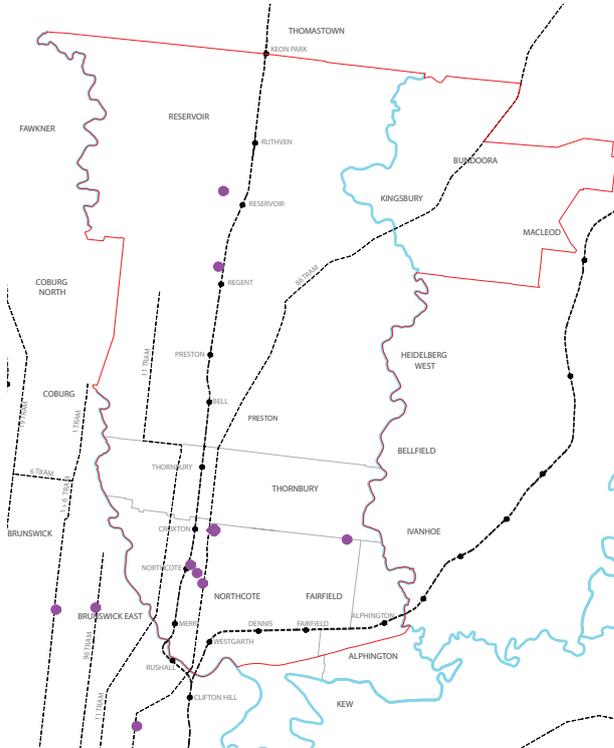
Cultural Goods - Manufacturing



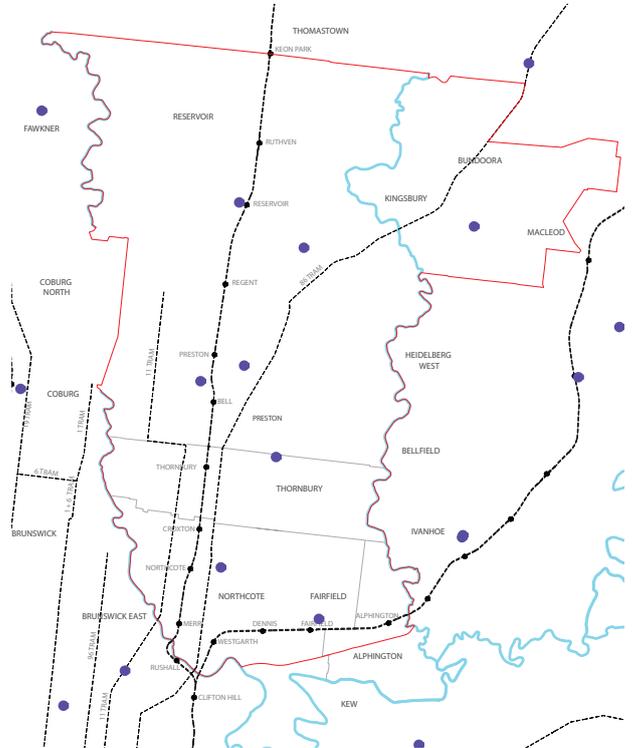
Design



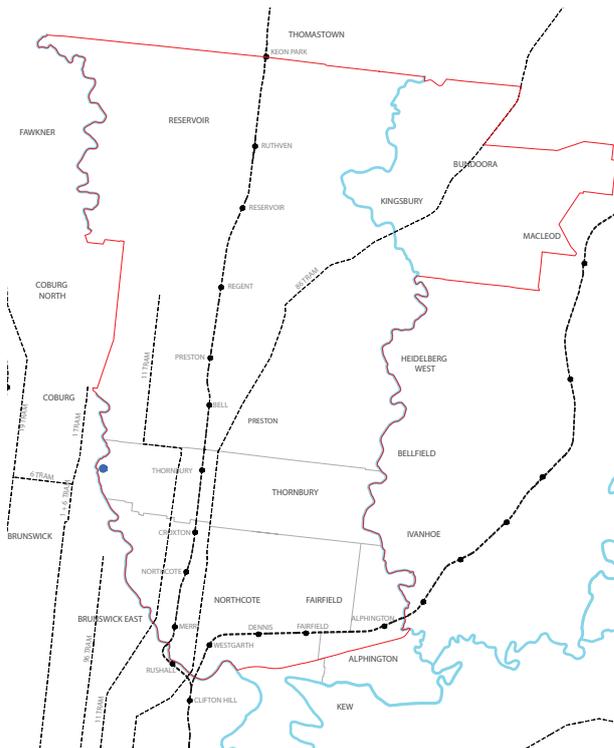
Fashion



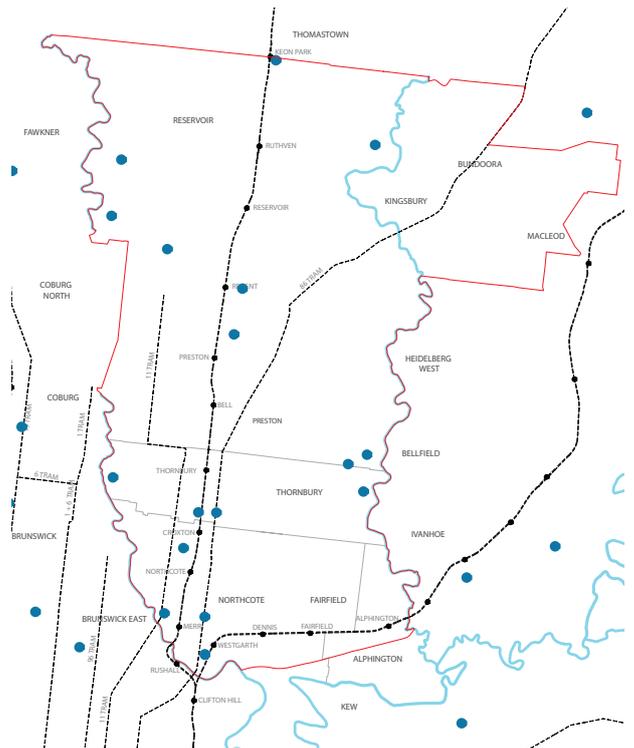
Library and archives



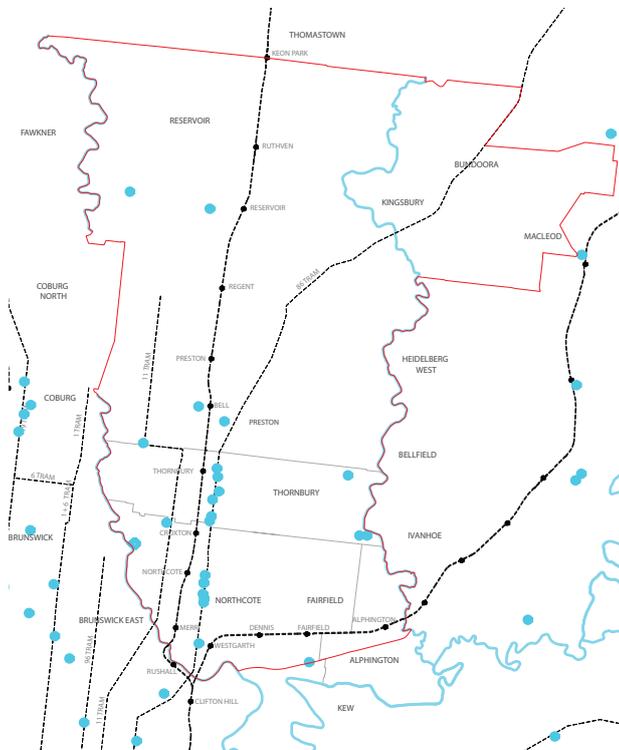
Museums



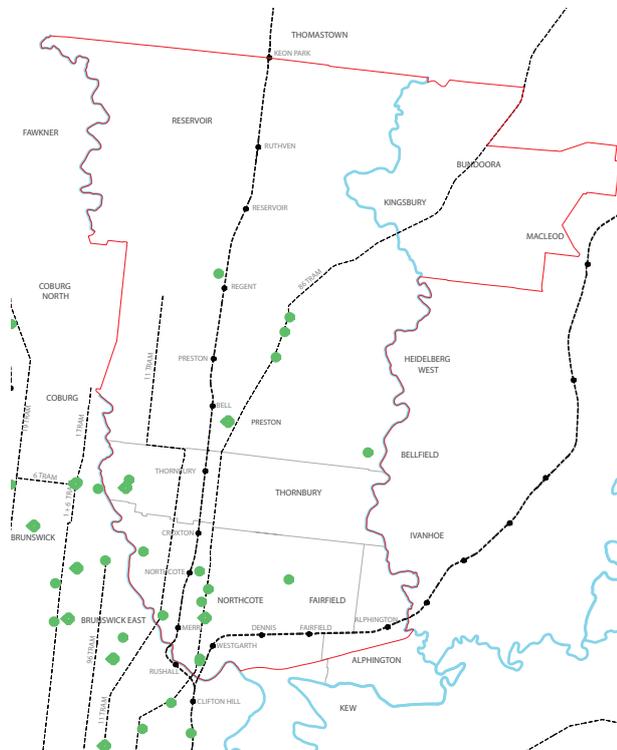
Music composition & publishing



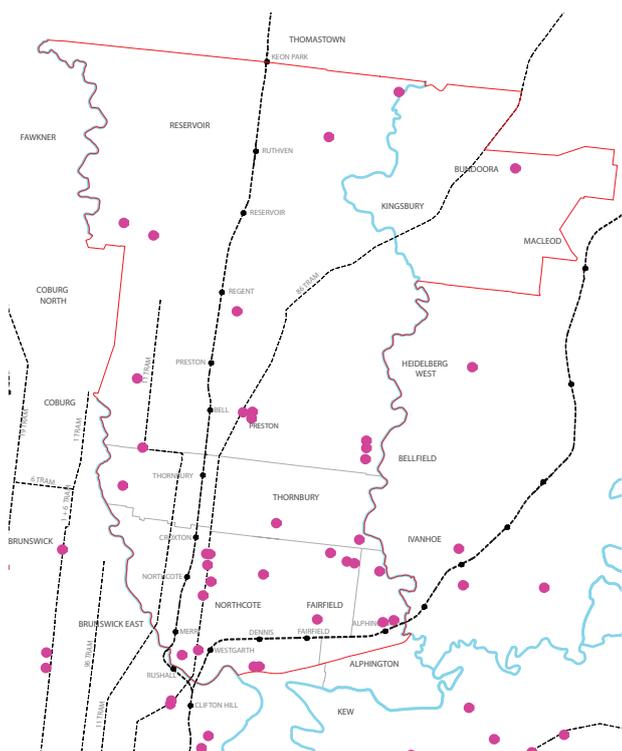
Performing arts



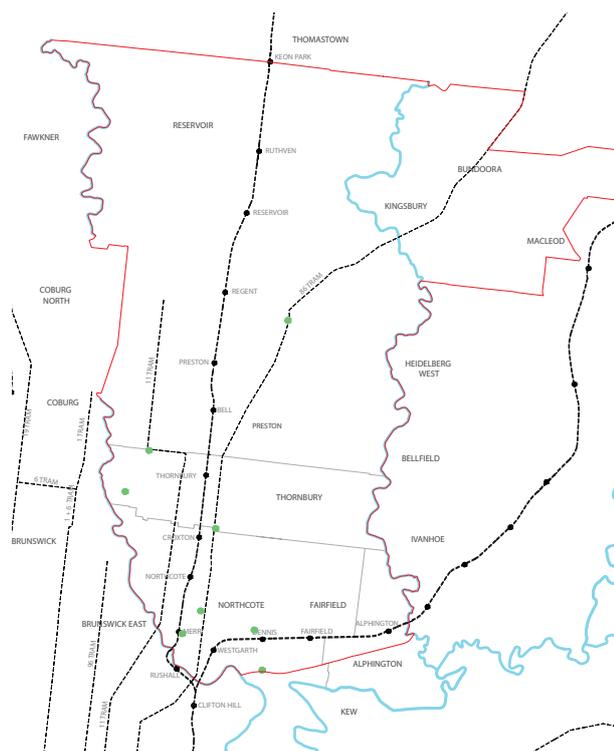
Visual arts - studios



Visual arts - exhibition spaces



Supporting activities



cities people love

Hodyl + Co

Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework

Prepared by Hodyl + Co for the City of Darebin

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