

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Defining our City - A Discussion Paper



City of Perth

Message of introduction

'Liveable cities are those that achieve a balance between providing a nurturing and encouraging environment for fledgling talents, and being bold enough to back ambitious and innovative enterprises at scale and smart enough to support traditional needs too.'





The City of Perth recognises the importance of culture in building social cohesion, city identity, and in supporting livability, sustainability and growth – creating a city to be proud of.

Building on wide-ranging community consultation undertaken for its Community Strategic Plan, the City has commissioned the development of an Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy to guide our investment in these important elements of our City's life.

With an abundance of outdoor spaces – parklands, rivers, our connection with the sea, and access to high standards of education and healthcare – our City is ranked in the top 10 most liveable cities globally.

In the introduction, the City of Perth's Public Art Strategy notes that: *'Liveable cities are those that achieve a balance between providing a nurturing and encouraging environment for fledgling talents, and being bold enough to back ambitious and innovative enterprises at scale and smart enough to support traditional needs too.'*

This has informed our engagement with groups and individuals, from artists and production companies to our diverse multi-cultural community. The City's built and natural assets, and many achievements in arts, culture and heritage are celebrated.

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Perth respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which the city is built – the Whadjuk Noongar people of Western Australia - and pays its respects to Elders past and present

Strategic Community Plan

The City of Perth is currently preparing a ten-year Strategic Community Plan to provide future direction for the City. Share to Shape was an extensive community consultation process undertaken in 2017 to inform the development of the Strategic Community Plan. Nearly 2000 residents participated in the consultation through surveys and discussions.

What this document does

*This is your City.
We invite your
ongoing participation
in developing the Arts,
Culture and Heritage
Strategy through your
further comments
and feedback by
Wednesday 18th
October.*



The Ballad of Gary Hayes. Artist: Jessee Lee Johns

More than 150 individuals from the creative sector and the wider community have given voice to some of the issues and themes which matter to you right now. These will shape the priorities, strategies and goals over the next 5 years which will be set out in the City's first Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy.

This document will be widely shared in the community and aims to:

- Ensure we have heard what is most important to you
- Communicate some of the key themes and ideas which we heard.

The process and key themes emerging from the discussions so far are illustrated in the diagram on the next page. The following pages expand on these themes and pose some questions to you.



NOTE: Quotations in this Discussion Document are drawn from interviews and group discussions which were undertaken in the period leading up to preparation of the Discussion Document. We have not credited to individuals who made these comments.

The terms we have used

The **Arts** are the physical results of our creative impulse. The various art forms represent an outlet for creative expression which is both influenced by our culture and, in turn, influences it.

Culture is how we express who we are, as a member of a group. Through arts activities, festivals and events, through food and traditions – our culture makes us feel connected and welcome, and proud of our home and city.

Our **Heritage** is woven through our buildings and artefacts, and through our stories inherited from past generations which connect us with the present and which we preserve for future generations.

The 'City'

In this document we use the word City (capital C) to refer to the local government, the City of Perth. We use the word city (lower case c) to refer to the place.

In line with the City of Perth Act (2016) our City boundaries have expanded, and the City's responsibilities and strategy relationships been more clearly defined. The City sits at the geographical heart bounding the CBD and much of the major cultural infrastructure of Perth. When finalised, the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy will guide Council in its future planning for the City, but also engage with and consider implications for Greater Perth taking account of this broader role.

Creative industries and communities

The creative industries cover both traditional and new disciplines as diverse as game development and graphic design, fashion and filmmaking, performing arts and publishing, architecture and advertising, media and music, comedy and craft. They include activities that are commercially-driven and community based, from experimental to export-intense. We use the phrase 'creative community' to mean all those who work in the creative industries.



Pride in our liveable City

'People will come to Perth and be taken aback by the unique aesthetics of the buildings, weather, natural landscape and public realm.'

'Perth has a unique mix of natural beauty and urban vibe.'

What opportunities do we have to make our city more liveable?

What are the main challenges or barriers to Perth's liveability?

'My vision for our City is to have flexible, multi-use spaces that are activated, safe and vibrant throughout the day and night.'



We cherish the beautiful environment we live in – the river, beaches, parks, clean air, expansive blue skies and a mesmerising quality of light. Perth is ranked as the seventh most liveable city in the world based on security, environment, healthcare, education and culture. By world standards Perth is a safe, attractive place – and it boasts the presence of several universities. The relatively small scale of Perth enhances its liveability – it is large enough to accommodate major sporting, cultural, retail and other facilities and services, but small enough to feel accessible. We have grown in confidence, we no longer need to emulate others, and we are creating our own unique culture – with this comes pride in all our city has to offer.

'The arts can help foster a sense of ownership, belonging, and pride within a community. A sense of civic pride in residents can be achieved through the arts, leading to more engaged citizens and safer neighbourhoods.' 'The arts have [also] been instrumental in facilitating social cohesion, bringing tourism to unlikely places, fostering a sense of belonging, and preserving collective memory'

To become a vibrant international City we need an effective and integrated public transport system which gives Greater Perth improved access outside business hours. The safety of our streets and city squares will remain critical to building our sense of community and of belonging.

Perth is an affluent city. But many of its residents are not. Arts and culture need to be accessible, to make the most of our location and natural attributes so that the wider community can engage and celebrate all our city has to offer.

We are a highly liveable City

We need to engage our whole community more Perth

Our city is safe, attractive, and accessible, built on a human-scale

We could make better use of our great natural and built assets



Enhancing and connecting our cultural assets

‘Cultural hubs are popping up in the metropolitan area away from the CBD. This is the new frontier of arts and culture in Perth.’

‘Key arts organisations are housed in and around the City, so there has always been lots on offer.’

Are there opportunities for better connections with our cultural assets?

What do you think our priorities in cultural infrastructure investment should be for the next five years?



From arenas and stadiums to galleries and performance venues, our inner city is blessed with some of the country's best cultural facilities and public art spaces. Significant investment in our cultural infrastructure through our award winning City Library, Perth Stadium and the soon to be completed Museum as part of an expanded Cultural Centre, makes a culturally rich and active life accessible to our community. Complementing and connecting these world-class buildings will be the new Yagan Square and Elizabeth Quay, and the public spaces, expansive natural and botanical gardens and parkland, and the stunning UWA campus which hosts one of Australia's most important Indigenous art collections. We are an active and engaged community and we embrace our natural and built cultural assets as part of our identity. Physical connectivity and logical wayfinding will help us better engage in all the City has to offer.

Despite this significant investment in large sporting venues and cultural spaces to hold our great cultural collections, there are still some gaps. We need more small-scale spaces, especially for music exploration and performance; we have a world class Concert Hall which needs preserving and upgrading; and we have even more opportunity to bring to public view some of the city's impressive but hidden collections – both public and private. There is potential for better pedestrian connection between places and cultural spaces. Diverse ownership and management of some of our most important cultural spaces presents challenges for a coordinated, strategic approach to development of the assets, and this remains a work in progress. We have a great opportunity to take a strategic approach to cultural planning in fully realising our vision for a rich and fully engaged cultural life.

'It would be great if we had live performances spaces or precincts, complete with staging and sound, for affordable and accessible community festivals and events'

Rich in world class cultural, sporting and precinct assets

Significant public and 'hidden' collections

Need for further small-scale performance and music spaces

Need for coordinated approach between asset owners

Need for better physical connection and wayfinding



Sky. Artist: Geoffrey Drake-Brockman

‘Heritage buildings are now seen as an opportunity . . . We need to better identify heritage spaces.’

‘People are looking for meaning and value in the heritage fabric that they live and work in.’

‘There is a need to recognise, embrace and celebrate the Noongar culture.’

NOTE: The City is working with the Aboriginal community through representatives of the Whadjuk Working Party and Aboriginal community members to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan, and it is through this process the Whadjuk Noongar community’s views, aspirations and ideas will be captured to inform the next steps for the Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy. In addition to this, the City strongly encourages aboriginal organisations and community members to actively provide input into this discussion.

Our country has one of the oldest histories on the planet – the Whadjuk Noongar people have occupied this place for 45,000 years. This has been prominent in our discussions on arts, culture and heritage, but we want this to be a more visible and prominent part of our lives. Integrating our ancient history, heritage and language through early years' education, preserving language through signage, and a cultural centre are just some of your ideas. These are echoed through group discussions and initial interviews with members of the Whadjuk Noongar community.

Perth also has a rich European history and, more recently, significant connections with Asia. We have become a diverse multicultural city, full of stories, cultural traditions and community celebrations. Much of this activity is local and not visible to the wider community. Much of it too takes place outside the City boundaries – perhaps more events could be encouraged in our City's parks and public spaces, contributing to the sense of vibrancy and cultural breadth.

Our heritage buildings and settlement patterns are a valued part of our city's story. Recognising our connection we are now rediscovering our lost wetlands; spiritual, linguistic and physical connections across cultures; preserving and adopting historic buildings and inviting community to explore and engage with our past. Existing and new assets such as Yagan Square provide opportunities to celebrate our heritage. We have opportunities to build a clear narrative which frames our identity and informs our future, developing improved interpretive wayfinding and signage to connect us with our history and heritage.



How can we better celebrate our Indigenous and non-Indigenous history as a visible part of the city's life?

From your perspective, what has Perth's identity been? What is it now? What do you want it to be?

We take pride in our significant Indigenous and non-indigenous history as a rich part of our culture and identity

Our diverse communities preserve and celebrate a wide range of cultural traditions which can be part of our visible city life

We value our heritage and cultural buildings as part of our diverse city landscape

We can do more to communicate the stories of our history and heritage

Integrating and engaging our diverse communities

'The city must be a place of tolerance and belonging. A place where people feel safe and confident. The city needs to have accessible meeting places to facilitate those from all walks of life coming together.'

'Whilst suburbs can be quite homogenous the city centre is the place where all types of people come together and our collective values are articulated.'



We are a highly
diverse city
culturally

We have a
rich and diverse
calendar of events
and festivals
across our city

There is an
opportunity to
strengthen our ties
with our Asian
neighbours and sister-
cities to enrich our
cultural life

We need to find
improved ways
of supporting
our active
volunteer-based
organisations

We live and work in one of the most culturally diverse cities in Australia, with close ties to Asia. The 2016 census reveals that just 30% of the City population was born in Australia, compared with 66.7% in Australia as a whole. With nine sister cities, we have wide-ranging opportunities to connect through education, arts and culture, and festivals and events. Our multi-cultural communities bring a wealth of heritage, arts and culture which is expressed through a diverse calendar of festivals and events in their immediate communities, which could be more visible and lead to greater community engagement through fostering opportunities in the City to express and celebrate. Linking our natural and built assets with our diverse communities is high on everyone's agenda.

**What opportunities to
you see to engage with
our Asian neighbours
and our sister cities?**

**How could the City
of Perth best support
community cultural
organisations?**

In Share to Shape, we spoke of our aspirations for Perth as '*a truly multicultural city which is reflected in its art, events, food, values and attitudes*'.

Some of our community cultural organisations have expressed a desire for greater support. Their volunteerism can lead to burn-out. They want help to engage more broadly through help in marketing, mentoring, navigating red-tape, and being given access to tools and templates that will ease their work.

There are opportunities for closer coordination on programming between City, State and other agencies. With programming coordination, marketing support and access to improved infrastructure, these communities promise an even richer calendar of festivals and events, of music and food and family-friendly engagement. Active and engaged communities, rich in heritage and culture, have much to offer. While supported by a large volunteer community, their skills and resources are stretched and many are seeking new ways to engage and connect.



'Great originality of the arts due to the geography of Perth and the fact that it doesn't have any proximity with other cities.'

A visible and supported creative community

'We need more funding from different sources and better collaboration of funding between City and State.'

'It would be great to see initiatives which support investment in quality public art, and diversity of artists and different art forms...to enliven spaces and a creative city vibe.'

'Perth is "creating" many good artists and good arts. The real problem is to retain them. Often, they go somewhere else discouraged by the lack of audience and the inability to reach a wider community.'





What can we do to foster private support of artists and our creative artistic communities?

What aspects of local creative activity mean the most to you, and why?

Cities globally are recognising the social benefit of connected communities through fostering creative talent. The creative industries are significant to Perth's culture, economy and society, and central to its future. Creative occupations account for over 18,000 jobs in the City area, that is 13% of total employment. The gross value added to the local economy is at least \$10bn, and probably higher. Some elements of the creative industries – such as games software – are amongst the fastest-growing industries globally.

An economic snapshot does not capture what is seen and felt around Perth. The visual arts is high-visibility, Tim Winton is one of Australia's most famous authors, and the reputations of Black Swan and Yirra Yaakin are respected nationally. The creative industries influence our quality of life and the strength of our communities, and provide a source of inspiration and entertainment.

There is an opportunity to better engage through early planning with our creative community. *'Artists could be involved in early stages of strategic development decisions to provide a different outlook on cohesion between people.'*

To further support our creative community, we need the right environment. Affordable access to space for making and presenting – including co-working space and creative hubs, a sympathetic regulatory and zoning framework to encourage activity, and professional development support – all will help support creative practitioners and their businesses. In partnership with others the City can help to ensure these conditions for success are put in place.

There were also suggestions we could do more to encourage and support the creation of quality art in all its forms, and retain our young and emerging artists through encouraging a culture of philanthropy.

Our creative practitioners – the creative community – are a valuable contributor to the city's quality of life and economy

Our isolation from the eastern states stimulates our creative and entrepreneurial energy

We need to explore improved ways of supporting and retaining our creative practitioners, and drive new opportunities for growth, collaboration, and innovation

We need to leverage partnerships with Council, property owners, philanthropic supporters and the business community to identify and unlock spaces which foster and retain our creative community

Communication as a vehicle to community engagement

*'Ours is a city
where the art is
still underground,
where you need to
know where things
are happening'*

*'Young people are
considered an asset — by
creating opportunities
for youth to have a more
positive say in policy
and decision-making
processes the needs of
this group would be more
adequately addressed.'*

*'There is a lack of
communication, connection,
coordination — the City
doesn't engage enough.'*



The cultural life of our city will develop more effectively with good communications and smart connections between organisations and agencies. In addition to physical connections and accessibility, there is an opportunity for a cooperative, formalised and coordinated approach between the City, State, neighbouring local governments, public institutions and agencies to realise the potential for a cohesive and engaging cultural life for the City.

The quality of communication with the public will also be an essential part of how the wider community engages with the arts, culture and heritage of Perth. Some expressed the view that the City needs to listen and interact more closely with the community in developing its plans and programs.

The City provides various cultural resources but more could be done to increase awareness of these and expand access to them through targeted marketing strategies. Improved awareness of activities will increase engagement, attendances, and participation. Digital tools as well as more traditional media will play an important part in how culture is felt and understood by an increasing proportion of the community.

How can the City improve awareness of its resources and its support for communities?

Engage more fully in dialogue with the community in developing plans and programs

Provide a vehicle and means for accessible marketing and promotion of community activities and events for a connected community

Foster digital communication strategies

Use existing Chambers, Committees and Forums as platforms to build strategic communications

*'A great city
has a multitude
of activities,
experiences and
opportunities to
offer its citizens and
visitors alike.'*

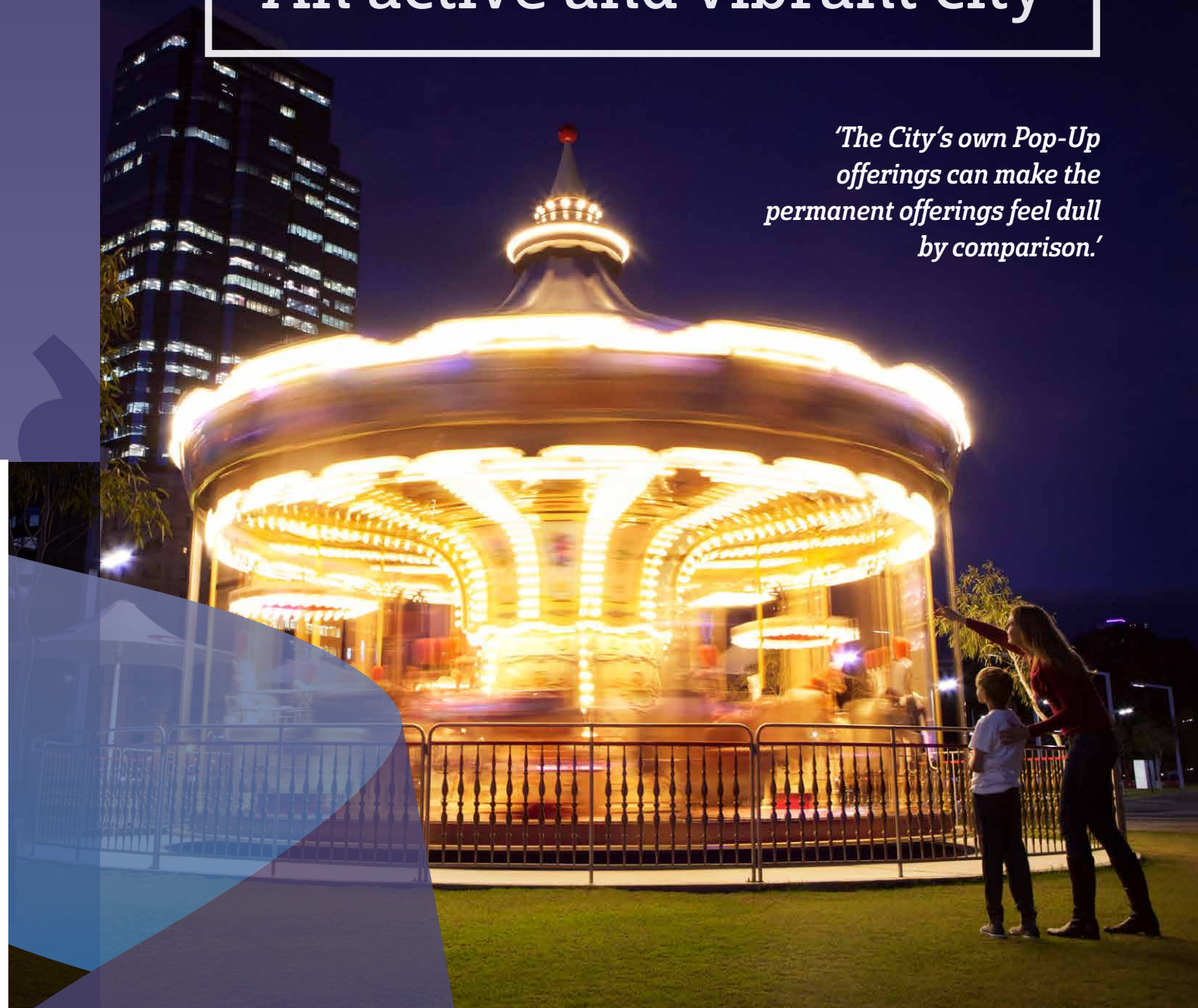
*'We need to strengthen the
relationship between tourism and
heritage and culture in the City.'*

**What role could
festivals and events
play in attracting
you to the City?**

**What ideas do you
have for achieving
an active and
vibrant Perth?**

An active and vibrant city

*'The City's own Pop-Up
offerings can make the
permanent offerings feel dull
by comparison.'*



Our stunning weather and connection with the river and parklands attract our wider community. We are becoming a city of festivals. Our International Arts Festival – one of the country's oldest city-wide cultural festivals – has been joined by the highly successful Fringe World, the nationally-recognised Awesome International Arts Festival “for Bright Young Things”, and the City's own evolving Winter Arts Festival.

‘Festivals promote diversity, they bring neighbours into dialogue, they increase creativity, they offer opportunities for civic pride, they improve our well-being. In short they make cities better places to be.’

The parklands and riverfront could be used further to accommodate festival activity – some supporting infrastructure would assist this.

A vibrant street culture is evident in local squares and precincts, and can be further stimulated through encouraging an active bar and café culture. As mentioned earlier, zoning and planning regulations can be designed to support artists and creative industries.

‘Public transport will be of key importance to the city's future, namely, how to get people in and out of the city to go to work, spend money and connect with what the city has to offer.’

There are times when the city is less vibrant. Better access will help the city's vitality and support the emerging dining and bar life, and attract great operators and ideas to engage at street level. There are opportunities for developers and entrepreneurs to contribute to breathing life into the city after hours. Initiatives to support creative thinking and reuse of spaces could generate a myriad of opportunities for our creative communities.

Activating the city after hours also needs a positive approach to public transport, in common with other major cities internationally. Connecting our communities with the city is the key to creating a destination city. The City of Perth sees the opportunity to take decisive action to activate the city and connect the community.

Remove the barriers to growing our emerging City bar and dining culture

Provide improved public transport access to support an activated after-hours City life

Building a coordinated program of State, City and community festivals and events program around our existing signature events

Regulatory, transport and other developments will support an active cultural life

The parkland and river front can be further used for festivals, with some infrastructure improvements



A photograph of the Perth City Post Office building, a grand stone structure with arched windows. In the foreground, a water labyrinth installation by Jeppe Hein is active, with many people, including children, playing in the water jets. The scene is captured with a long exposure, creating a sense of motion. Two green banners with the text 'WE SHOULD SPEND MORE TIME TOGETHER' and 'PERTH CITY' are visible on the left. The building's entrance is marked 'POST OFFICE'.

*Thank you for taking
time in contributing to
this discussion.*

We invite your ongoing participation in developing the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy through your further comments and feedback by **Wednesday 18th October.**

Following receipt of feedback we will prepare the Draft Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy. This will be issued for public comment before the final Strategy is prepared. If you have any further queries please feel free to email info@positive-solutions.com.au

Next steps



Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to all the members of the community who have generously given interviews or participated in group discussions – and we look forward to hearing further from them, and from Perth's wider community in response to the questions posed in this document.

