



New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale

## An Arts and Cultural Strategy for Armidale

### > THE CONTEXT

Armidale Regional Council is a new entity, created in May 2016, following the amalgamation of Armidale Dumaresq and Guyra Shire, the Regional Council recognised this a significant opportunity to develop an Arts and Cultural Plan that reflects the scope of this new local government area, and to celebrate local identity through support for the region's arts and creative industries.

The merged Council is located in the New England region of New South Wales, about 500 kilometres north of the Sydney CBD and 500 kilometres south of the Brisbane CBD, with an estimated resident population of 29,869 in 2016. Located next to the Great Dividing Range, New England High Country attracts tourists via its beautiful scenery, history and heritage buildings.

### > THE BRIEF

Positive Solutions was commissioned by Armidale Regional Council to develop an Arts and Cultural Strategic Plan for 2017 - 2022. The aim of the plan is to recognise the central role of arts and culture to the Armidale region, to find ways of building and sustaining Armidale's arts and creative industries, to identify infrastructure needs, and to celebrate and respect Aboriginal culture and heritage within the broader cultural landscape.

#### SEE ALSO:

- > [Coffs Harbour Cultural Strategic Plan](#)
- > [Ipswich Arts and Cultural Strategy](#)
- > [Armidale Arts and Cultural Strategic Plan](#)
- > [AlburyCity Creative Economy Strategy](#)
- > [City of Perth Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy](#)

### > OUR APPROACH

Positive Solutions worked closely with the Armidale Regional Council to develop the Strategic Plan. This included preparing and implementing a consultation strategy in partnership with Armidale's Regional Council's Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee; undertaking interviews and group discussions with local stakeholders within the creative sector; reviewing Council's existing policies and plans; and undertaking benchmarking research to explore cultural strategies in comparable national and international communities.

In preparing and implementing the plan, we included key objectives, an action plan, and monitoring and evaluation tools for measuring activities and outcomes. We focused on building and sustaining arts and cultural organisations and events, working with local Aboriginal groups, nurturing creative networks, encouraging high quality public art, maximising community engagement and identifying tourism opportunities to build a thorough document that reflects the needs of the region.

### > THE RESULTS

The Arts and Cultural Strategic Plan 2017-2022 outlined future-focused strategies that recognise the central role of arts and culture to the liveability of the region, including economic, educational, and social wellbeing. The Arts and Cultural Strategic Plan was positively adopted by Council with many of the recommended initiatives being implemented, including the development of new public art works, the introduction of new community workshops, youth activities, and creative community initiatives. Council was awarded a Live Music Grant to hold a local festival in April 2018. This supported the growth and development of local musicians and to increased business opportunities for local performance venues.