



Brimbank
City Council



Brimbank Festivals and Events Policy and Strategy 2022–2025

DRAFT

Acknowledgement of Country

Brimbank City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Wurundjeri People, and pays our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Cover image: CircaNICA Performer

Introduction

Festivals and events enable communities to feel connected and to feel proud about where they live, work and play. In Brimbank, one of Melbourne's most diverse municipalities, they illuminate our rich tapestry of places, cultures, beliefs, traditions, arts and talents. Festivals and events are also important to stimulate local economic activity, showcasing our great places and attractions, and helping to place Brimbank on the map as a visitor destination, both within the municipality and outside it.

Importantly festivals and events have been identified by Council as having a key role in helping to achieve its vision for the Council Plan 2022-2025:

A transformed Brimbank that is beautiful, thriving, healthy and connected

Purpose

The Festivals and Events Policy and Strategy 2022-2025 (Policy and Strategy) defines Brimbank City Council's role and ways it will support a program of festivals and events. It continues the direction set by the 2018-2021 Policy and Strategy. It articulates the resource commitments Council will make and how we will work with our local community to ensure festivals and events are inclusive, best practice, safe, sustainable and flourishing.

Council's Policy and Strategy also explores the opportunities for Brimbank to partner with others to bring new audiences and offerings to the festivals and events Program.

Objectives

The objectives of the Policy and Strategy are:

- To align the strategy and resourcing for festivals and events to the Council Plan 2022-2025.
- To support communities in Brimbank to deliver inclusive, well managed and safe festivals and events.
- To provide a festivals and events program that is content diverse, supports gender and social equity, and is geographically spread across the municipality.
- To assist to develop the audiences and promote festivals and events.
- To connect local cultural development with festival and event programming.
- To assist festivals and events be financially viable, environmentally sustainable and develop successfully.
- To seek partnerships and opportunities that will support a vibrant festivals and events program .

Scope

This Policy and Strategy applies to festivals and events that Council organizes, provides permits for, funds (wholly or partly) or with which it partners.

For the purposes of this Policy and Strategy:

- **Festivals** are an organized series of celebratory and enriching events or programs for the broader community that are linked around a particular theme or place and have limited time duration.
- **Events** are a time limited, organized, singular focus activity delivered to the wider community or a target audience. The categories of events include:
 - **Community events** organized by Council, local groups or organizations for the community. Examples include the cultural celebrations, flower shows and heritage festivals.
 - **Major events** are larger scale and may have a regional, state, national or international profile. These events may be managed by professional event organizers. Examples include the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival which hosts events in Brimbank under its banner.
 - **Civic events** are events produced by Council which recognize days and events of significance. They are usually ceremonial, remembrance, advocacy or celebratory in nature. Examples include NAIDOC, Australia Day and Awards, and the We Are Brimbank Awards.

There is often a convergence between what is an event and a festival. Whilst a festival is an event, not every event is a festival.

There are many festivals and events held in the municipality that are not within the scope of this Policy and Strategy as they are privately organized and exclusive in attendance. An example would be corporate conference events, or private birthday celebration in a park.



Strategic Objectives and Policy Statements

Festivals and events need to adhere with this Policy's strategic objectives and other Council policies to ensure they reflect Council values.

Council is guided by the following Strategic Objectives of the 2022-2025 Brimbank Council Plan and the Festivals and Events Policy Statements.

Strategic Objective

Pride and Participation

Community and cultural connections built through social and artistic expression

Policy Statement 1:

Council recognizes that communities are well placed to deliver community based festivals and events and will help build the capacity of the local community to plan, partner and deliver these activities.

Strategic Objective

Wellbeing and Belonging

Responsive services that support mental and physical wellbeing

Policy Statement 2:

Council will ensure that the principle benefit of Council's resourcing and support to festivals and events will be to improve the lives of people living in Brimbank, for example, Council will not support events that include any form of gambling.

Strategic Objective

Liveable and Connected

Inviting and liveable spaces and facilities, connected so people can get around

Policy Statement 3:

Council will ensure festivals and events are inclusive of the broader community and contribute to the cultural vibrancy and diversity of Brimbank.

Council will also ensure that it supports and produces festivals and events that advance positive gender and social equity outcomes.

Strategic Objective

Sustainable and Green

Protect natural environments for current and future generations

Policy Statement 4:

Council commits to developing a program of festivals and events that protect and enhance the environment and are designed and delivered to efficiently manage resource needs into the future.

Brimbank Council Roles and Responsibilities

Council's roles and responsibilities in supporting the development of a vibrant festivals and events program for the Brimbank community are:

Patron and Partner

Council provides funding to festivals and events through an annual Community Grants Program and through Funding and Licence Agreements. Council's approach is to ensure funding investment and partnerships are fully leveraged by clearly articulating expectations and the link to Council's objectives as defined in the Council Plan and the Festivals and Events Policy and Strategy.

Enabler

In addition to direct funding, Council will enable and assist festivals and events through a range of supports. These include:

- Use of community venues and public facilities
- Marketing and promotion
- Mentoring and professional advice on risk management and event management
- Supporting networking opportunities and introductions between like-minded businesses and groups to collaborate on festivals or events
- Professional development and community capacity building through skills training and community cultural development
- Supporting local community cultural development and audience development, including through the use of the Cultural Development Network's planning and evaluation platform, Takso
- Attracting festivals and events to Brimbank that enhance the offer to the community.

Producer

Council produces a number of events of a variety of scale. Some events are to celebrate and commemorate important community and cultural traditions such as Reconciliation Week, Festive Season, NAIDOC and Remembrance Day. Others are to showcase and share information at events, like the Sustainable Living Festival.

Monitor and Regulator

Council ensures the regulation of festivals and events according to Council standards and compliance requirements, including traffic management, liquor licensing, environmental health, risk management and COVID Safe planning.

To ensure a vibrant and successful festivals and events program is developed that meets the needs of the community, Council will monitor and evaluate, track emerging trends, influences and community requirements.

Council's Strategy

What we will do over the next 3-4 years to support and develop a flourishing festivals and events program.

Patron and Partner

Strategy

1

Continue the Community Grants

Under Council's Annual Community Grants Program, eligible recipients will be able to apply for funding support to deliver festivals and events in Brimbank that meet the Community Grants eligibility criteria. The Community Grants aim to build community connections, reduce social isolation, promote community participation and healthy relationships, share cultural knowledge and/or improve social and mental health of community members.

Strategy

2

Explore / seek opportunities to partner with signature Melbourne or regional based festivals and events

Melbourne has a suite of world class festivals and events held in the city each year. Many of these are reaching out beyond the central business district boundary to provide programs and offerings under their banner in other locations. Examples include Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, MidSumma, Melbourne International Jazz Festival and Melbourne Fringe Festival, some with which Council already engages. Additionally Melbourne's Western Metropolitan Region is growing a vibrant festivals and events program with neighbouring Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay Council holding major Melbourne attractions such as the Laneway Festival and the Newport Folk Festival. There may be opportunities to enhance the programming of festivals and events in Brimbank, particularly through partnerships with the other Western local government authorities.



Image credit: Djambi Dancers

Enabler

Strategy 3

Promote Brimbank festivals and events

Council assists local festivals and events with promotion on Council's website events listings. Promotion locally and beyond will be enhanced, including development of a calendar of festivals and events to be widely distributed through Council's various media platforms.

Strategy 4

Develop a program of skills based training and information to support festivals and events organizers

Council will continue to provide support to organizers of festivals and events through events permits, guidelines and advice. To complement this, a program of skill development with particular focus on the Community Festivals and Events Grant Fund recipients will be undertaken. The program will include safety and compliance, marketing and promotion, event management and planning, audience development, linking with other Council departments, access and equity for participation, environmental sustainability, risk management, COVID safe planning, acquittal and evaluation. Council will explore how to make the training increasingly accessible through 1:1 mentoring or targeted training in community languages or with interpreters. Some may be recorded, have subtitles in other languages to increase accessibility.

Strategy 5

Investigate new sites and platforms for holding festivals and events

The municipality's diverse offerings of natural outdoor settings as well as private and public owned facilities and spaces, can provide unique locations for festivals and events. The availability of suitable indoor and outdoor venues will be given priority consideration.

Preliminary assessment of existing open spaces has identified potential Council owned sites to stage large festival and events of 1,000+ attendees. These sites will be further considered as part of the review of the Creating Better Parks Policy and Plan.

In addition to these open spaces, Council will prepare an inventory of other locations and platforms suitable for festivals and events, including indoor and outdoor venues, online options and any other suitable media (eg: radio, TV). Many festivals and events have needed to pivot to online platforms and there are many learnings from this approach that can be taken forward. Council will promote these options and recommend the most appropriate for festivals and events producers.

The Bowery Theatre, offers a place where art and culture can be celebrated, ideas discussed, arts education explored and bold entertainment experienced. This facility, as well as unconventional sites such as laneways and former industrial buildings, will be explored as new sites for festivals and events. The Bowery Theatre and St Albans Community Centre (STACC) will be used and promoted as a festival hub.

Strategy 6

Explore additional resourcing to support community festivals and events producers

As more community groups and organizations produce festivals and events and are recipients of Council grants, more resourcing is needed to ensure they are adequately supported. Council will explore additional resourcing such as external grants to meet demand.

Producer

Strategy 7

Deliver a program of civic events

Council will continue to deliver a range of civic events and lead by example with high standard, well-managed, safe and accessible events. Civic Events produced by Council include:

- NAIDOC
- Australia Day and Awards
- We Are Brimbank Awards
- Citizenship Ceremonies
- Festive Season Program
- A variety of official opening and launch events that include Ministers and/or Members of Parliament

Strategy 8

Deliver a program of Brimbank City Council festivals and events for the Community

Council produces a number of local Brimbank festivals and events with and for the community throughout the year. Currently these include, but are not limited to:

- The Brimbank Writers and Readers Festival
- Sustainable Living Festival
- Brimbank Disability Expo
- Brimbank Seniors Festival
- Brimbank Volunteer Reward and Recognition event
- Refugee Week
- Cultural Diversity Week
- International Women's Day
- Be Bold Festival

Monitor and Regulator

Strategy

9

Provide Procedures and Regulation for festivals and events on Council property

Council will continue to provide procedures and guidelines for festivals and events and issue permits to hold events on Council land.

Strategy

10

Assess and evaluate the festivals and events program

Council will evaluate and monitor the festivals and events it produces. Council will support and require, through its funding and license agreements, evaluation of those festivals and events it funds and with which it partners. Council will continue to map and monitor festivals and events to help Council and community understand the gaps and opportunities and to inform future actions and activities.



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