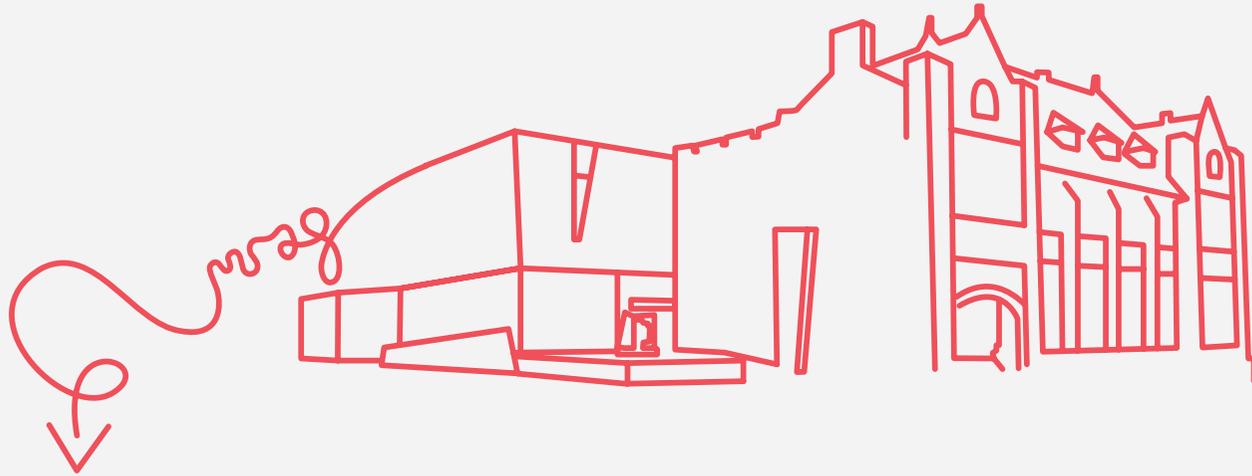


# MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

—  
Strategic Plan  
Summary 2025



(image) Featuring art by Christopher Hodges from the MRAG Collection,  
dancing by Belle Beasley and on violin, Benjamin Lambert.



We acknowledge the Wonnarua People  
as the Traditional Owners and Custodians  
of the land upon which MRAG stands



## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

MRAG 2025 is informed by and aligned with the followed plans and strategies

### Maitland Destination Management Plan

The Central Precinct is identified as a priority hub for Maitland's Destination Management Plan. The precinct is home to key civic and cultural institutions including the Town Hall, Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Repertory Theatre all housed in substantial 19th century buildings. The Central Maitland Structure Plan identifies this area as a crucial anchor within Central Maitland.

### Regional Conversations 2008 – 2020

Maitland Regional Art Gallery initiated a community wide conversation about art and culture during the renewal process in 2008, speaking with more than 150 people in the Maitland region. After opening in 2009, MRAG continued its conversation with the community - refining the vision and expanding the audience. In 2020, MRAG is reviewing its priorities in consultation with the community, and is working to fully realise its vision as a dynamic and inclusive arts and cultural space for all.

### Central Maitland Structure Plan

In this plan, a vision for Central Maitland was defined as a place for vibrant community and public life, a place that celebrates significant historical value and a place for learning and artistic expression. The 2009 report heralded the beginning of a cultural renaissance in Maitland and highlighted the opportunities for the role of Maitland Regional Art Gallery as a catalyst for a burgeoning arts and cultural environment for Central Maitland. This vision remains today and the strategies within MRAG 2025 will go far to meet the intent of the Central Maitland Plan.

### MAITLAND +10

A prosperous and vibrant city - A unique sense of identity and place is found within our villages, suburbs, towns and City Centre. Maitland is seen as a desirable place to live, an easy place to work, a welcoming place to visit and a wise place to invest.

### Indigenous Road Map - Australian Museums and Galleries Association

Creating a welcoming space for Indigenous peoples means that they feel comfortable entering museums and galleries. As a first step, this is about respect and acknowledging Indigenous people as first peoples of Australia. As colonial institutions, museums and galleries have historically been viewed as oppressive environments by Indigenous people. In order to change this, organisations need to build trust and deeper relationships with Indigenous people and change the way the space itself presents the way it values Indigenous cultures.

### NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2030

Culture is highly valued in communities. It is seen as integral to community life and a contributor to economic growth.



## OUR VISION

We foster creativity, enable inclusion and promote knowledge. We present opportunities for the enjoyment of art and cultural endeavour for the Maitland community, its visitors and our digital audience. We do this through the work of artists and the stewardship of our collection and cultural programs.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to deliver innovative, engaging art exhibitions and cultural programs for the exchange of knowledge and ideas and the enjoyment of the growing Maitland community and its visitors.



## OUR OBJECTIVES



### Connection

We will enhance our service to the community through a program that champions artistic excellence, advocate for the role of art and artists, invest in creative exchange programs, and extend the Gallery's reach through targeted audience development.



### Stewardship

Through the acquisition, development, care and management of the MRAG collection, we bring our works of art to life and increase public access to ideas, history and conversations.



### Leadership

We will ensure our organisation is fit for the future. We are resilient, sustainable, accountable and progressive.



### Cultural Infrastructure

We care for the heritage of our buildings and ensure our physical assets and civic spaces are used to full advantage.



# MRAG STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 – OVERVIEW

## Summary prepared by Dr Barbara Piscitelli

Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) is one of regional Australia's important galleries. Since the 1950s, the collection and the gallery have been supported by the community, local government, artists and donors. Located in Central Maitland since 2003, MRAG provides a welcome space for locals and visitors to this growing regional community. Following its renewal in 2009, MRAG has significantly grown its audience, collections and business. MRAG is a key Maitland City Council facility. The MRAG Strategic plan is aligned with the objectives of the Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan, Maitland City Council's Delivery Plan and the Maitland Destination Management Plan.

In 2019 - 2020, MRAG completed a strategic planning process for the period 2020-2025. The process involved broad community consultation with key stakeholders, online and in person surveys with community, focus group meetings with MRAG staff and members, desk research and discussions.

Audience research was undertaken, with more than 600 individual responses to the survey and consultation with key stakeholder groups. Key recommendations from the Engagement Report include increasing Indigenous engagement, extending MRAG's Arts and Health programs, increasing awareness of MRAG as a place of community connection, and investing in creative learning as a core function of MRAG. Each of

these recommendations is represented in *Maitland Regional Art Gallery 2025* – the strategic plan.

In this planning cycle, MRAG will focus on broadening, deepening and diversifying its audience, and specifically investigated the needs of people from First Nations communities, young people, people with a disability, regional visitors, and culturally and linguistically diverse groups (CaLD).

The strategic plan was developed through a community engaged process and crafted into its final form in September 2020. The plan clarifies MRAG's vision and mission, and specifically focuses on 4 key areas: connection, stewardship, leadership and cultural infrastructure.

MRAG plans to support its audience by its ongoing activities of producing exhibitions, acquiring collections, offering programs to encourage repeat visits and forge enduring relationships with its audience.

Further activities are forecast in *Maitland Regional Art Gallery 2025* with a focus on increasing engagement of Indigenous peoples, school students and young adults through sustainable practices involving the community as collaborators and active learners.





The *Stewardship* section of the strategic plan emphasises the important work of digitising the MRAG collection by 2025 and developing a business case for open collections to make the collection accessible to the public and to researchers.

The strategic plan focuses on being future fit and examines MRAG's business practices from several points of view: financial, professional, collegial and commercial. MRAG has a key role to play in the community as a valued asset to promote creativity, to enhance wellbeing and to strengthen social capital. The strategic plan outlines a number of key areas for action including rigorous audience research and organisational documentation, collaboration with local government, partnerships with donors, and ongoing retail opportunities for artists and makers.

The strategic plan renews MRAG's commitment to care for the heritage of the buildings and to use all spaces to best advantage. This includes regular maintenance, renewal of spaces and new initiatives.

When MRAG undertook its first audience research in 2008, there was a desire for a lively arts and cultural precinct in Maitland. In the past 12 years, MRAG has grown into its new building and taken its place as a leading regional gallery in Australia through its popular exhibition and public program. The next 5 years will provide ample time to broaden, deepen and diversify MRAG's offerings for the growing Maitland regional community.



MAITLAND  
REGIONAL  
ART  
GALLERY



2025

