

A vibrant night festival scene. In the foreground, a large crowd of people is gathered, many holding up their phones to capture photos. In the background, a large, illuminated structure resembling a traditional Maori haka shield (haka) is suspended from a crane. To the right, a massive display of fireworks bursts in the sky, reflecting on a body of water. The scene is lit with various colors, including purple, blue, and orange.

PENRITH

Real FESTIVAL

EVENT STRATEGY & 10-YEAR PLAN

2021 - 2031

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Penrith City Council acknowledges and values the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of the Penrith area and show our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We work together for a united city that respects the land, that values the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Real Festival is a major arts and cultural event produced and funded by Penrith City Council. The free, annual festival was launched in 2016, and is held on the banks of the Nepean River.

Our Council and community are justifiably proud of Real Festival. It has grown exponentially since its launch as a family-friendly river activation, now attracting national recognition and international collaborations, producing innovative cultural experiences and immersive performances for our diverse audiences.

The *Real Festival Event Strategy and 10-year Plan* serves as a framework for Real's development over the next decade. Produced in consultation with key stakeholders and industry experts, it includes an overview of our ambitious vision, core values and objectives supported by a realistic, detailed action plan.

Our success relies on building the festival organically in response to our community and audiences. As the Real Festival continues to develop its dynamic, authentic reflection and celebration of "who we are", we aim to create a meaningful, lasting cultural impact on audiences and transform our cultural ecology and perceptions of Penrith.

The Real Festival must be sufficiently resourced and supported to deliver the participatory arts experiences our audiences desire within each year's new, engaging program. Aligning with major festivals, fostering effective partnerships and securing financial support from a range of sources including local, state and federal funding, is critical to consolidating a sustainable funding model.

In just four years, Real Festival has set cultural benchmarks, outstripping other local government events. Showcasing the best Penrith has to offer, it has brought a wealth benefits to our community and economy.

Penrith needs an iconic event and Real Festival is ready to fill the role.



PART A
ABOUT REAL



WHY THIS PLAN?

The Real Festival Strategy and 10 Year Plan outlines a clear direction and detailed actions for the Festival. It is focused on enhancing Real Festival's authentic growth and development over the next decade as a dynamic, creative reflection and celebration of our community, environment, tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The strategic plan articulates our vision, core values and objectives. Informed by input from internal stakeholders and industry professionals, it sets out a step by step action plan and identifies opportunities for growth in scale, programming and capacity building. The plan supports the Festival in securing partnerships and sponsorship to help bring our vision to life.

Our community is at the heart of the Real Festival. The Penrith City Council Event Strategy and 10 Year Plan aims to ensure our diverse audiences, arts and cultural practitioners, stakeholders and partners, are engaged, challenged and entertained by a cultural festival that supports a growing, evolving community and brings economic and social benefits to our city.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL STRATEGIES

Real Festival's objectives and values align with the outcomes of the *Penrith Community Strategic Plan*, in particular:

✦ **OUTCOME 4:**

We have safe and vibrant places, and

✦ **OUTCOME 6:**

We are healthy and share strong community spirit.

The event also delivers on a range of outcomes and recommendations from other important strategic planning documents which guide Council's programs and services.



ALIGNMENT WITH PENRITH EVENTS STRATEGY 2020-2024

Real Festival aligns with the findings and recommendations of the *Penrith Events Strategy 2020-24 Think Penrith Think Events*.

The strategy states:

"Events are an integral thread in Penrith's cultural fabric, contributing significant economic and social benefits. They bring communities together, celebrate diversity and foster pride in the city."

Its objectives are to:

- ✦ Grow our city's identity and grow as an events destination
- ✦ Maximise economic and social benefits, and
- ✦ Optimise resources.

As outlined in this 10-year Plan, Real brings our community together, celebrates the diversity of our people and places and fosters pride in our City.

Real has an established brand which is linked to our City's identity – including its connection to the Nepean River. If we continue to strengthen this brand through partnerships and with dedicated resources, Penrith will strengthen its place as an events destination.

THE STORY SO FAR

Real Festival was seeded in the *Our River Masterplan* (2013), which identified the activation of the river as a key deliverable. The idea was given shape in the *Penrith Destination Management Plan* (2015) which proposed an iconic event to significantly benefit the local visitor economy. In 2016, the Community Panel added its voice, calling for regular activities in the river precinct.

The concept of a “Penrith River Festival” was presented to Councillors at a briefing in early 2016 with the recommendation that funds from Council’s Australia Day activities should be deployed towards the new event.

The Real Festival’s name is an acronym of the original four programming pillars - **R**iver, **E**nvironment, **A**rt & **L**ifestyle. The inaugural Festival in November 2016 was well attended by locals and visitors and the audience has continued to grow each year, as Real Festival becomes established as a major arts festival in Sydney. In 2019, the inclusion of international works alongside content commissioned and produced by the Festival was extremely well received, highlighting the community’s appetite for unique, inclusive and immersive art experiences.

While the COVID-19 pandemic prohibited the 2020 and 2021 staging of the Festival, Real is set to return to its home at Tench Reserve in 2022 with an adaptable program adhering to Government Health restrictions and recommendations.

The river, environment, art and lifestyle still shape the event, however the Festival has expanded its focus to the four key objectives of **Community, Positioning, Arts & Culture** and **Connection**. This shift responds to community feedback, demand for a major arts and cultural event for Penrith and closely aligns with the aims of Council’s strategic planning framework.



WHAT WE HAVE HEARD FROM OUR COMMUNITY

EVENTS STRATEGY (2020)



Events are an integral thread in Penrith's cultural fabric, contributing significant economic and social benefits. They bring communities together and foster pride in the city.

OUR RIVER MASTER PLAN (2013)



Activation of the river was identified as a key deliverable. Including the development of spaces to cater for major community events.

Future development plans including landscaping and infrastructure requirements take into consideration the hosting of Real Festival into the future including future growth opportunities.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (2015)

Showed an iconic event would significantly benefit the local visitor economy and an increasing desire from our community and visitors for unique and authentic experiences.



COMMUNITY CONSULTANCY PANEL (2016)

Made recommendations for the activation of the river precinct through special events.

COVID RECOVERY TASKFORCE (2020)

Engagement with local businesses and community organisations expressed there was a strong desire to see events and activations back in Penrith and the importance they have in strengthening and supporting community.



2019 REAL FESTIVAL SURVEY DATA

Our community has shown their desire for Council to continue to produce and fund Real Festival with **93%** showing their support and **91%** indicating they will return next year.

Audience growth: 36% increase in 4 years. Projected 10 year growth to exceed over **65,000** at the "festival hub" (based on current conservative growth trend of 10%).

Increase in **Net Promotor Score** and **Audience Satisfaction** demonstrating we are building loyalty and engaging experiences through our program content that our community want.

	2018	2019
NPS:	57	60
Satisfaction:	83%	86%

37% increase from 2018 to 2019 in audiences from outside the Penrith LGA - demonstrates local brand loyalty and word of mouth referrals.

Real Festival audiences said their event highlight in 2019 was the headline performance of "All That We Are", showing that **producing and developing our own unique works** is the right step moving forward.

Council's key internal stakeholders were consulted as part of the development of the Real Festival Events Strategy and 10-Year Plan.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

PENRITH AT A GLANCE



BY 2031

POPULATION

200,000

260,000

1.3m
ANNUAL
VISITORS



64,830
DWELLINGS

38.5%
COUPLES WITH
CHILDREN

MEDIAN
RESIDENT
AGE

34

29%
RESIDENTS
AGED
UNDER 20

12,412
LOCAL BUSINESSES

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The importance of Penrith's evolving cultural landscape is reflected in many of Council's strategic documents which identify artistic, cultural and creative production as vital to community well being.

We recognise that a lack of resources, limited creative and production spaces, cultural infrastructure and venues, challenge our ability to meet the cultural needs of our growing population.

Council is dedicated to resourcing our arts and cultural sector, investing significantly in local cultural institutions including the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and Penrith Regional Galley, and in creative production and delivery of initiatives such as the Real Festival.

If sufficiently resourced, the increasingly pivotal role the Real Festival plays in Penrith's cultural landscape could expand significantly over the coming years. Having demonstrated that the festival can attract internationally acclaimed artists and generate innovative new works, the Real has begun to broaden our community's cultural experience and awareness, build capacity and make the possibility of working in the arts more viable and accessible, particularly for young people.

The 2016 census noted that 35% of our population (approximately 70,000 people) were aged under 25.

Real Festival has the potential to demonstrate that employment opportunities exist - both in Penrith and in the arts - to the burgeoning pool of creative talent within this cohort.

The number of people aged 15 to 34 years in our City (the group most likely to attend and participate in arts, culture and creative industries) is expected to double within the next two decades. An investment in our cultural landscape, including the Real Festival, is an investment in our people - the future creators, participants and consumers of arts and culture.

Council builds capacity in Penrith's arts and cultural sector by employing professional cultural staff to foster community and cultural development, support creative industries and professional development programs, projects, events and place activation. Together, these staff deliver high-quality outcomes for our City, community and local cultural practitioners. Council's work in this area connects emerging artists and creatives to peer networks and career pathways and provides employment for professional practitioners. In doing so it builds capacity in our arts sector.

This ongoing work provides a strong foundation on which to establish our reputation as a regional centre for creative production.

PLACE CONTEXT

Real Festival is currently staged in Tench Reserve along the banks of the Nepean River, the physical and conceptual heart of the Festival.

Winding its way through, and connecting the towns and villages of Penrith, the Nepean continues to play an important role in our historic, social and cultural identity, environment and imagination. Its banks and waters provided a traditional source of food and shelter for First Nations people and remain culturally significant. Post-European settlement, the river supported agriculture and has long been a focus for leisure activities. A source of great community pride, it provides our City with a cool, green environment within a warming climate.

Part of the wider Hawkesbury Nepean River system, the river connects diverse areas of NSW and provides the majority of Sydney's water supply. Council is committed to protecting the cultural significance and health of the Nepean and its ecosystem.

The Real Festival weaves creative threads of history, culture and identity through the rolling open green spaces (averaging 70 metres width) of Tench Reserve. The large expanses of grassed areas and mature canopy trees on the banks of the Nepean River are transformed by a creative lens, becoming a site for dynamic programs and performances inspired by the River and fostering deep connections between people and place.

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

PERCEPTION

Real is perceived as a family-friendly event with a 'good vibe' and relaxed atmosphere.

ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders recognise the Festival is an effective outreach channel for customer communication and promotion of initiatives and want to continue their involvement.

CHANGE

Excited about the Festival's shift to arts and cultural programming and the potential for attracting more visitors from outside the Penrith region.

FUTURE

Very interested in the new opportunities that satellite activations could bring to community engagement.

Managers and Coordinators from key internal Council departments were asked to consider three key questions in the consultation process: their perception of the Real Festival, the vision for its future and the quality and quantity of their future participation in the event.

The following departments were involved in consultation:

- ✦ **Communications (Design & Media)**
- ✦ **Economic Initiatives (Marketing & Tourism)**
- ✦ **Customer Experience**
- ✦ **Children's Services**
- ✦ **Waste Services**
- ✦ **Sustainability**

CASE STUDY ONE

REAL FESTIVAL 2019

The 2019 Real Festival drew a record crowd of **27,500**, a **37.5%** increase on its inaugural presentation in 2016. In 2019, brand recall increased significantly and **93%** of Festival patrons surveyed expressed the desire for Council to produce the annual event.

Destination New South Wales contributed \$20,000 to the marketing campaign as well as in-kind promotion of the Festival as a major event. Broad mainstream media coverage included a prime-time feature on Channel 7 News and interviews on 2GB.

The vibrant Festival program featured a range of compelling immersive experiences, lively musicians and street performers and awe-inspiring performances, including the world premiere of *All That We Are (Todo lo que Somos)*. Real Festival Producers, acclaimed Spanish Director Younes Bachir and Australian aerial specialists, *Strings Attached*, collaborated to develop and direct the elaborate, breathtaking aerial spectacular featuring a crane extending high into the sky over the Nepean River suspending professional performers and community participants.

All That We Are (Todo lo que Somos) celebrated the spirit of community and aligned with Real's four objectives:

COMMUNITY – volunteers from the community participated in the show as performers.

POSITIONING – working with internationally acclaimed partners to create bold new content.

ART & CULTURE – free access to high quality entertainment for the audience and mentoring opportunities for Nepean Creative and Performing Arts School students.

CONNECTION TO PLACE – designed specifically for the River's unique geography, the work contained a strong environmental focus.

All That We Are (Todo lo que Somos) and the 2019 Festival program in general, placed both the community and the river at the heart of the event, representing a significant milestone for the Real Festival.

It also indicated that developing national and international partnerships, and the potential opportunity of co-producing content with sister festivals to share production costs and establishing the drawcard of a reliable "circuit" for directors and performers are strong drivers for the Festival's future success.

The 2019 Real Festival was a seminal moment in the Festival's history, promising an exciting future.

THE FUTURE VISION



The Real Festival has the potential to enhance Penrith's status as an arts and cultural hub.

With the construction of Sydney's second airport on Penrith's border and ongoing government investment in transport and social infrastructure, our City is undergoing significant revitalisation over the coming decade. Dovetailing this transformative growth, the Real Festival's future within the strategic development of Penrith as a vibrant arts and cultural centre, should be secured within these parameters:

KEEPING THE RIVER HUB - growth at this site will be supported by event infrastructure and a dedicated parking area that sits sensitively within the environment.

SATELLITE EVENTS AND ACTIVATIONS - introduce satellite programming to increase accessibility, create a city-wide buzz, spread economic benefit and increase programming possibilities.

CREATE OUR OWN CONTENT - develop our own cultural voice, talent and unique identity, potential to tour shows to other festivals and create jobs in the local arts industry.

MIX OF FREE AND PAID EVENTS - maintain high-quality free entertainment to ensure accessibility, alongside paid shows to build further value into the event, ensure audiences and help fund quality program offerings.

CREATE A REAL MONTH - clustering events and minifestivals across the month of the Real Festival to encourage intrastate and interstate visitors to spend time in Penrith.

We will achieve this will be through the following strategies:

COLLABORATION - COLLABORATION - with local, national and international partners to create unique and ambitious programming.

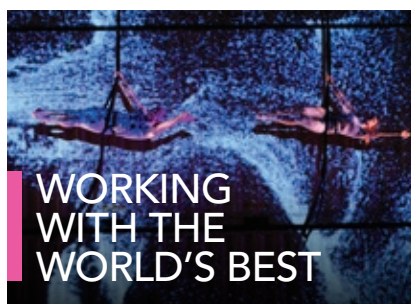
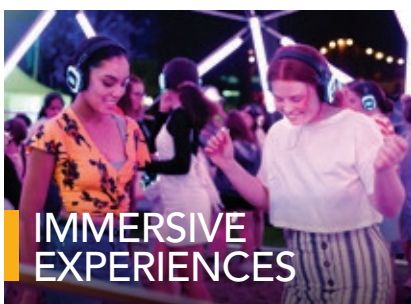
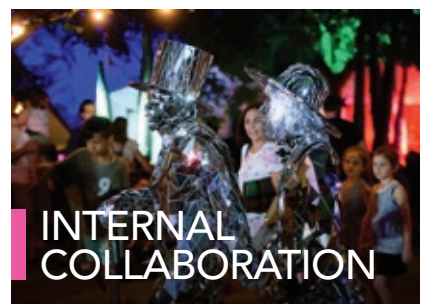
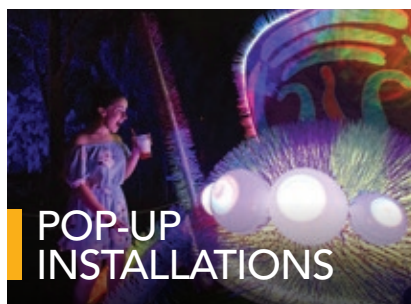
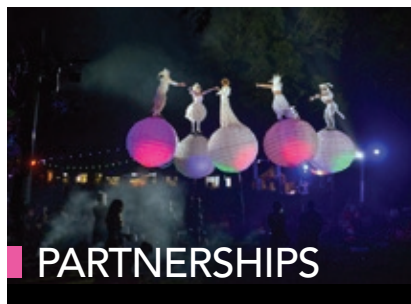
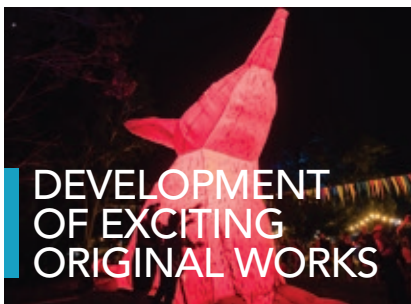
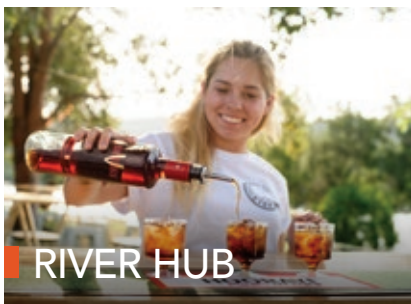
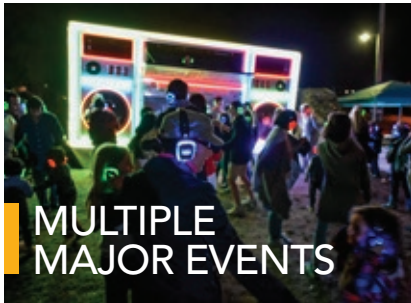
CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP AND GRANT FUNDING - to secure the festival's financial stability and longevity.

PARTNERSHIPS - explore and secure partnerships with key internal stakeholders, arts bodies, cultural institutions, philanthropists and other major festivals (to share costs through co-productions, co-promotion, and attracting talent by being part of a "festival circuit").

MENTORSHIPS - to build skill base and grow creativity in our community and City.

INCLUSION - more inter-generational, interactive, participatory programming to create a point of difference and reflect community feedback.

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT



PART B OUR POTENTIAL



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE WANT TO BE?

REAL FESTIVAL OBJECTIVES

Regardless of how we grow and change our community will always be vital to the success of the event. If the community love Real, growth and our future success is guaranteed. This means we need authentic programming that resonates with our community and tells Real stories, provides Real experiences and creates Real connections.

Our objectives have evolved over time to reflect this and are as follows:



WE ARE

INCLUSIVE	We make world class arts and culture accessible for everyone. We embrace our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, past, present and future, and work together to share their stories. We want everyone to be part of the experience, not just a spectator.
FUN	We engage our audiences in surprising new experiences that challenge and delight them. We contribute to Penrith's status as a vibrant, liveable city.
BOLD	We are not afraid to be different and stand out from the crowd.
PROUD	Our pride in our City, diverse community, rich history, natural and social environment find expression in our ambitious, inclusive approach to the presentation of the Real Festival.
CREATIVE	We think outside the box and work with the best to deliver a dynamic festival full of energy.
UNCOMPROMISING	We strive for best practice, sustainable delivery of an innovative, creative, inclusive, accessible festival.

WE VALUE

ENGAGEMENT	Reaching out to connect people and create transformative experiences within our distinctive spaces.
CURIOSITY	Facilitating discovery, awareness and learning through diverse, engaging and unexpected forms.
THE UNPREDICTABLE	Out of the box thinking, uniqueness, flipping preconceived notions on their head!
INNOVATION	Consistently pushing boundaries in the research, development and delivery of a resourceful festival informed by the latest ideas and art forms that are environmentally sustainable.

THE REAL AUDIENCE

Current Primary Target Audiences

FAMILIES

Demographics: Parents aged 25-45 (2+ kids ages 5-15)

Location: Penrith + Western Sydney, Sydney Metro and Surrounds.

Psychographics:

- + Want to engage their children in new experiences
- + Looking for fun ways to build memories with their children
- + Seek affordable family experiences
- + Want something easy to organise

PEOPLE WITHOUT KIDS

Demographics: Youth and Older people (18-65yrs)

Location: Penrith + Western Sydney, Sydney Metro and Surrounds.

Psychographics:

- + Seeking unique food experiences
- + Open to experiencing new things
- + Open to travelling for events
- + Wanting to experience quality art and cultural experiences

BUILDING OUR FESTIVAL COMMUNITY

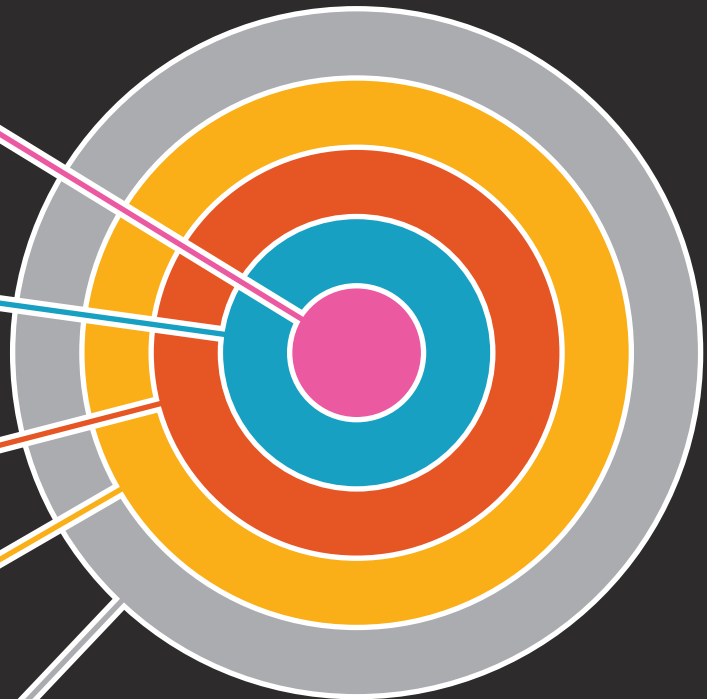
Local **COMMUNITY** (Build support and enthusiastic advocacy to encourage word of mouth referrals)

Our **NEIGHBOURS** - Camden, Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains (close access to bespoke cultural experiences)

Greater Sydney, Inner West
DAY VISITORS - regional flavour within a 2 hour drive

Intrastate / ACT -
OVERNIGHT VISITORS

Interstate Overnight Visitors, International - Extending their stay or **MAKING PENRITH A DESTINATION** in their itinerary



A festival's audience is its biggest asset and its local community its strongest advocates.

The Penrith community is our current core audience with the neighbouring regions of Camden, the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury areas showing increasing interest in the event.

Our aim is to continue to develop a uniquely distinctive festival that inspires pride by communicating local stories and bringing the best of international culture to Penrith. Our community's pride in the Real Festival creates strong advocates and powerful word-of-mouth referrals, helping us expand our audience over the next decade and beyond.

CASE STUDY TWO

ADELAIDE FRINGE FESTIVAL

The Adelaide Fringe Festival is held over 31 days in Summer and is the biggest arts festival in the Southern Hemisphere. The festival is a not-for-profit open access event (anyone can register an event) that offers a diverse program of free and ticketed experiences.

The festival has grown organically over 60 years, with the 2020 festival the most successful of its history. It brought together more than 6,000 shows and independent artists across 300 plus venues around South Australia. In this way, the significant economic and social benefits of the Fringe extend beyond Adelaide into regional areas.

The Fringe is built on a sustainable funding model supported by corporate sponsorship and state and local government grant funding. It injects \$41.6 million new money into the state's economy, attracts international visitors and fills more than 150,000 hotel beds over the 31-day program.

It also has an established First Nations program, which attracts around \$100,000 worth of grants for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Through extending its program into remote areas of South Australia, the Fringe has become a registered charity that provides resources and support to artists, producers and venues and brings them together with the world's best.

The Fringe is a perfect example of how festivals build arts into the cultural fabric of a place. Adelaide is now known as "the festival city". The creative energy of the Fringe has generated an explosion of curiosity and innovative ideas across the arts and cultural sector and this energy has concentrated itself in Adelaide.

In the Fringe month, there are multiple mini-festivals happening around Adelaide, strengthening and complementing the event offering and giving visitors more reasons to come and to stay.

The festival is embraced by the local community and the loyal global community of advocates and devotees it has created over many years.

RELEVANCE TO REAL

The Adelaide Fringe Festival shows how we can position ourselves in the event space and what we can achieve. While the Fringe is an open access festival and Real a curated event, both connect to people and place. Adelaide Fringe started in 1960 as a community arts festival and has grown into a hugely successful and internationally recognised event.

CONTEXT

WHAT FESTIVALS BRING TO A COMMUNITY

SOCIAL • ARTISTIC • CULTURAL • ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

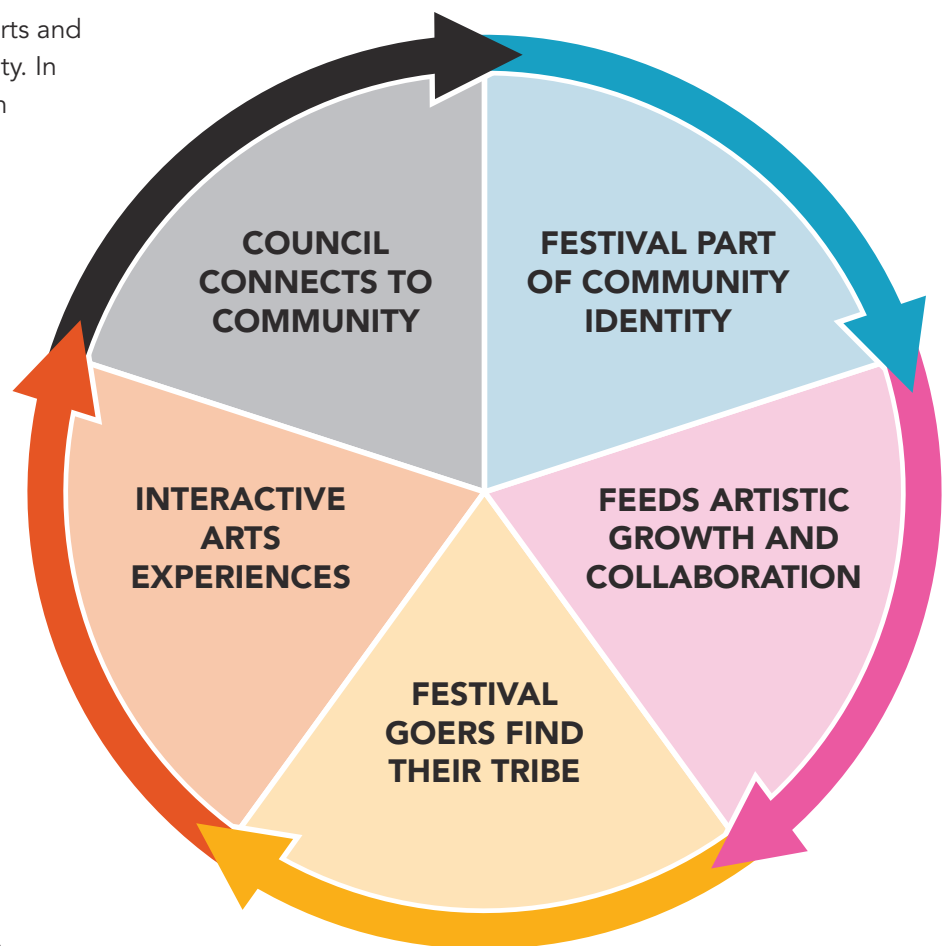
Festivals foster a sense of community and pride. They generate economic growth, showcase natural assets, enhance community health and wellbeing and help shape a city's identity.

They bring people together for a shared experience and foster relationships – between audience and performers, between performers themselves, within the audience and between the community and Council. In this way Real becomes a valuable vehicle for Council to showcase its values, services and the important work we do for the community.

Longstanding festivals build arts and culture into a community or city. In the same way businesses form mutually beneficial clusters, an arts festival can position a city as a cultural centre, a magnet for creative people, businesses and enterprises.

Festivals also have the power to change the cultural ecology of a place and its people. Cultural ecology centres on the way beliefs and practices help us adapt to our environments and live within our ecosystem. In an arts setting, it reflects the power of exposing populations to new ideas to broaden perceptions and encourage participation.

Imagine a young Penrith resident experiencing Real. They enjoy the experience at face value, but they also absorb the possibilities it represents. Real shows them they come from a city where local people deliver and are part of world-class arts and culture. It instils the belief that in Penrith, and in their own lives, anything is possible. A kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, this helps create a vibrant city with limitless potential.



INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Council engaged StollzNow Research & Analysis Advisory to prepare an overview of Real Festival and opportunities for development and growth.

The report indicated Real has a Net Promotor Score (NPS) of 60 and a satisfaction index of 86. The NPS is an industry comparison tool and 60 is an excellent result for a newly established event.

The 2018 Parkes Elvis Festival had an NPS of 76. This festival has a long history, is well established and heavily funded.

However, funding is not a clear indicator of success. Major long running Sydney CBD events, produced and funded by the NSW Government have received an NPS as low as 20.

The StollzNow report also provides information on the Darwin Festival and VIVID to demonstrate that they did not burst onto the scene fully formed, but rather grew organically with their audience.

The analysis indicates that **if Real is given the right support to and enough time, it can occupy a niche place in the industry** – providing accessible world-class art experiences to a broad audience.

In just four years, Real has established its brand, strengthened brand recognition and attracted internationally acclaimed talent.

With the right funding model and continued community support, Real Festival will have a remarkable future.

NB: Net Promotor Score is a measure of how likely Real Festival audiences are to recommend Real to their friends and is used to gauge overall satisfaction. An NPS of minus 100 - 100 is considered poor, 0-30 is good, 30-70 is great and 70-100 is outstanding and very rare.





WHAT SETS REAL APART?

WORLD CLASS PERFORMANCES

IMMERSIVE ARTS EXPERIENCES

STUNNING RIVERSIDE LOCATION

MENTORING LOCALS

REAL BRAND – WHO WE ARE

SPARKING NEW IDEAS AND INNOVATION

BUILDING ARTS INTO THE FABRIC OF OUR CITY

BENCHMARKING:

NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT SIGNATURE EVENTS

Real Festival aims to be a leader within NSW Local Government festivals and events, several of which are detailed in the table below. These signature events resonate with annual events presented by Penrith Council, including Australia Day, Penrith Producers, Cinema in the Park, Music by the River and anniversary events, such as Penrith's Bicentenary in 2015.

WAVERLEY COUNCIL: FESTIVAL OF THE WINDS

Event Program

International kite flying display on Bondi Beach including;

- Food stalls
- Kite and kite-related market stalls
- Kite making workshops
- Local multicultural dance performances
- Roving performers
- A 'kid zone' with jumping castles, obstacle courses, activities etc.
- Festival of the Winds has been running for 41 years.

PARRAMATTA COUNCIL: PARRAMATTA LANES

Event Program

Food, music and art festival including;

- Live music
- Food stalls
- Public art installations
- Roving entertainment
- Workshops

THE HILLS: ORANGE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Event Program

Local community celebration including;

- Entertainment – Aussie Rock
- Rides
- Food stalls
- Council department stands
- Light installations
- Roving performers
- Fireworks

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN: BANKSTOWN BITES FOOD FESTIVAL & RAMADAN NIGHTS

Event Program

Food festival including;

- Cooking demonstrations
- Entertainment
- Food stalls
- Market stalls
- Guided food tours
- Bankstown Arts Centre Open Day

BATHURST WINTER FESTIVAL

Event Program

Local community celebration including;

- Ice rink
- Food stalls
- Market stalls
- Projections onto buildings
- Local musicians

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS

Event Program

Local community celebration including;

- Food stalls
- Market stalls
- Rides
- Local entertainment
- Aussie rock

COVID 19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 global pandemic has significantly disrupted the cultural sector, severely impacting the viability of events and festivals and their safe delivery, decimating sector employment as well as local and international tourism. While many festivals were postponed or cancelled over the past 12 months, coming together as a community to connect in a cultural context has become more important than ever.

Recent Council events have been well attended and received positive feedback expressing the community's gratitude, however we are aware that many residents are anxious about the safety of attending public events. We must plan within current Government health advice

and find innovative ways to program covid-safe, brand-aligned content in order to continue to provide our community with opportunities to connect to one another and actively participate in our City's cultural life.

Increased agility, vigilance, creativity, additional staffing and budgetary resources will be required to successfully deliver the Real Festival program within strict safety parameters.

Despite these challenges, our objectives and strategic priorities remain a consistent guide to our progress in the coming decade.

PART C ACTION PLAN



THE PLAN

The research, consultation and data from previous Real Festival surveys has shown a strong desire to build on the positives and this is reflected in the vision, objectives, and strategies.

VISION

To develop and deliver a unique, distinctive, authentic and internationally recognised arts and cultural festival that fosters local pride, positions Penrith as a cultural leader in major events, attracts diverse short and long term tourism visitation and builds local cultural capacity and employment.

MISSION STATEMENT

Real Festival aims to transform Penrith during Spring, into an inclusive, accessible, and authentic celebration of art, culture and creativity. By presenting a bold contemporary program that evokes curiosity, celebrates the unpredictable, attracts tourism and immerses our diverse audiences in transformative cultural experiences.

OBJECTIVES



1. COMMUNITY – PEOPLE

- 1.1 Building community pride, ownership and identity by telling diverse stories in new forms.
- 1.2 Creating a culture of inclusion and accessibility.
- 1.3 Strengthening and building resilient communities.



2. POSITIONING – QUALITY

- 2.1 Produce a bespoke, multilayered, internationally recognised arts and cultural festival showcasing Penrith as a cultural leader in major events and an attractive tourist destination.
- 2.2 Establish a creative, authentic, bold brand that is unique to Penrith.
- 2.3 Best practice processes across the diverse cultural ecology.



3. ART & CULTURE – OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 Deliver a bold, contemporary festival program encouraging participation and featuring interactive, inter-generational experiences where audiences become immersed in experiences – not just a spectator.
- 3.2 Providing accessible cultural opportunities.
- 3.3 Building cultural capacity by fostering local emerging artists, offering ongoing opportunities in the arts and cultural sector and creating pathways for personal and social development.



4. CONNECTION – PLACE

- 4.1 Identifying and communicating the unique elements of Penrith's cultural, historical and natural environment to facilitate connection and belonging.
- 4.2 Championing sustainability in all aspects of the Festival's delivery to conserve and protect our natural environment.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

– LINKING BACK

TO OBJECTIVES

SURVEY RESULTS

- Satisfaction
- Net Promoter Score
- Attendance

SPONSORSHIP & GRANT FUNDING

- Corporate financial and In-kind investment partnerships
- Government Funding

ANALYTICS & DATA COLLECTION

- Exposure, engagement delivery via Marketing & Communications Plan Objectives

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Number of day trippers as a direct result of Real Festival
- Number of overnight visitors as a direct result of Real Festival

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

- Engagement
- Alignment of other Council Strategies
- Council departments feedback and objectives met

ACTION PLAN

The Steps Required to Achieve Our Vision

The action plan outlines the strategies and actions informing the next decade of the Real Festival's development. The practical step by step approach scaffolds the foundations for achieving the Festival's vision and objectives, and is supported by both a detailed implementation plan and resourcing plan.

The action plan is underpinned by 5 key strategic priorities.

COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Creative & Corporate Partnerships:
Arts & Cultural Industry Sector,
Government, Tourism & Local
Businesses.

CULTURAL SOCIAL & ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Contribution to the
Community's Social &
Cultural Engagement; and
Economic Initiatives.

CONSUMER MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Reinforce consumer positioning as
a major arts and cultural festival -
positioning Penrith as a destination.

Building and extending the Real
Festival brand to new and
growing audiences.

ADVOCACY & FUTUREPROOFING

Identify opportunities and key
influencers for the festival's future
success and projected growth.

Infrastructure, site, and
sustainable financial models.

WHO WE ARE?

Brand positioning and identity.
Creating positive and strong brand
associations for:

- Council
- Penrith as a City
- Real Festival

Creating authentic experiences. Have a
clear personality knowing who we want
to be and what we want to say.

1. COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This strategic priority recognises that the best outcomes are achieved through identifying and securing collaboration and strategic partnerships with the local community, local businesses, the arts and cultural industry and government partners.

SHORT TERM 1 - 2 YEARS	MEDIUM 3 - 5 YEARS	LONG TERM 5 - 10 YEARS
Explore cultural programming partnerships and opportunities through Council's Sister Cities programs.	Build Real Festival operations team to deliver a safe and professionally managed festival that supports the festival's sustainable future growth.	Create opportunities for youth and artists through mentorship and traineeship programs.
Create partnerships with key arts organisations, festivals, theatre companies and production houses to develop new works and potentially share resources and content.	Build on current investment relationships and partnerships to generate new funding opportunities.	Develop a volunteer and internship program to be extended to local school, TAFE and universities.
Create opportunities for skill sharing and education for local creative artists.	Create a program to support emerging artists through linking them with recognised industry professionals.	

2. CULTURAL, SOCIAL & ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Culture creates vibrant communities, it supports the expression of how we tell our stories, celebrate, remember the past, entertain ourselves, and imagine the future. Culture provides important social and economic benefits. With improved learning and health, increased tolerance, and opportunities to come together with others. Culture enhances our quality of life and increases overall well-being for both individuals and communities.

SHORT TERM 1 - 2 YEARS	MEDIUM 3 - 5 YEARS	LONG TERM 5 - 10 YEARS
Investigate opportunities for collaboration between cultural and community organisations.	Include a percentage of program items that are newly developed works produced by Council.	Expand the satellite program to include local community organisations and businesses.
Work with local community groups to build and strength First Nations programming and partnerships - creating opportunities for education, deeper connections and building pathways within the broader First Nations artist community nationally.	Investigate opportunities to host multiple external events during the festival and over the month of September to provide an itinerary of experiences and events that visitors to the region can enjoy and extend their stay to experience.	Explore opportunities to include intergenerational and intercultural experiences in programming.
Explore opportunities for cross cultural experiences unique to Penrith.	Develop a satellite events program to provide more opportunities for audiences during the festival and over the festival month.	
Build industry relationships with other arts and cultural festivals and performing arts organisations.		

3. CONSUMER MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

As a major arts and cultural festival, Real will continue to focus on the local market to build a strong following and brand loyalty among the Penrith community and will extend the brand to new and growing audiences. The plan aims to enhance the sense of pride and ownership that the Penrith Community have of Real Festival, creating word of mouth referrals broadening our audience reach.

SHORT TERM 1 - 2 YEARS	MEDIUM 3 - 5 YEARS	LONG TERM 5 - 10 YEARS
Achieve an annual increase in Real Festival's audience growth, satisfaction and Net Promoter Score.	Build Sydney Day Trippers awareness and engagement of Real Festival.	Build intrastate awareness and engagement of Real Festival.
Increase brand awareness and word-of-mouth referrals for Real Festival.	Refresh the Real Festival brand with investment in design, website and branding assets.	Develop a Real Festival tourism campaign and incentives package ready for implementation.

4. ADVOCACY & FUTUREPROOFING

In order to future proof the event, a number of actions targeting opportunities with key internal and external stakeholders have been identified to promote and amplify the festival's future success and projected growth.

SHORT TERM 1 - 2 YEARS	MEDIUM 3 - 5 YEARS	LONG TERM 5 - 10 YEARS
Develop alternate revenue streams including a mixture of paid and free program options.	Develop a permanent parking and transportation plan which is maintainable for the festival's future growth.	Investigate opportunities for newly developed works produced by Real Festival to be showcased at other festivals or develop a touring schedule beyond the Festival showing.
Develop a sustainable internal budget allocation with Council's finance department.	Investigate alternative structure options that provide the best opportunities for future funding.	Develop a permanent parking and transportation plan which is maintainable for the festival's future growth.
Develop internal agreements with Council departments to fund and resource their participation over three years.	Streamline event planning processes and market data capture through the investment of CRM and Event Management Software.	

5. WHO WE ARE?

Illuminating Penrith’s distinct character - its diverse communities, beautiful river environment, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and interaction with First Nations peoples, social, cultural and economic potential - is key to creating authentic cultural experiences for Real Festival’s audiences. The strategic placement and celebration of art, artists, cultural practitioners and the Penrith community are at the centre of the Festival’s program and development will support focused and authentic future growth.

SHORT TERM 1 - 2 YEARS	MEDIUM 3 - 5 YEARS	LONG TERM 5 - 10 YEARS
Develop an Accessibility Plan for the event to embed accessibility into the planning, programming and site.	Continue to increase innovative program content with new shows and installations.	Include a percentage of program items that are newly developed works produced by Council.
Continue to develop the event site in line with the 'Our River Masterplan' and government funded development projects.	Develop an event sustainability plan in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals that develops a model of sustainable practice through targeted guideline for informing choice of suppliers, products, and delivery of the festival.	Partner with local cultural institutions to expand programming and audience reach.
Build industry relationships with other arts and cultural festivals.		



APPENDIX



ONE OFF FUNDING




YEAR	FUNDING REQUIREMENT	RATIONALE
1	Covid safe planning and infrastructure \$44,000	Additional infrastructure and Covid marshal requirements as a requirement from NSW Health.
2	Covid safe planning and infrastructure \$44,000	Additional infrastructure and Covid marshal requirements as a requirement from NSW Health.
3	Event management software \$31,000 (onetime purchase fee)	Streamline project management delivery, planning and CRM through the purchase of licenced events management software.

RECURRENT FUNDING

YEAR	FUNDING REQUIREMENT	RATIONALE
3 2023/2024	Event Operations Assistant under a full time employment agreement. \$58,000 - 5 days / 12 months	Additional resourcing required to adhere to Government Health Regulations and streamline administrative processes. Administration support throughout the year, site operations management during festival time.
	Hub Site Manager x 1 under a fixed term employment agreement. \$12,000 - 5 days / 6 weeks	Managing the safe delivery and installation of site-specific installations, production and infrastructure requirements.
	Event Crew x 2 under a fixed term employment agreement. \$9,000 - 5 days / 2 weeks	The safe installation of site-specific installations, production and infrastructure requirements.
	Artist Liaison under a full time fixed term contract agreement. \$6,000 - 5 days / 3 weeks	Additional resourcing required for the management of all artists taking part in the Festival program. The Artist Liaison works under the supervision of the Associate Producer.
	Vendor Coordinator under a full time fixed term contract agreement. \$2,000 - 5 days / 1 week	Additional resourcing required for market stall and food vendor management including the management of food and bar precincts on the festival site. The Vendor Coordinator works under the supervision of the CACP officer assigned to assisting with vendor management.
	Development of new work \$50,000	Additional funding to be put towards the development of new and unique installations/performances for inclusion in the main festival program.
	TOTAL INVESTMENT YEAR 3 = \$137,000 + overall budget CPI at 2%	

YEAR	FUNDING REQUIREMENT	RATIONALE
4 2024/2025	Production Manager under a full time or fixed term employment agreement. \$55,000 - 5 days / 9 months	Additional resourcing required for to provide extra support to deliver the event including Risk Management and Site Management.
	Brand Design and Website Refresh engaged via an external agency. \$12,000	Brand Refresh engage an agency to undertake a brand refresh and website design. Moving forward Graphic and Website Design support to be provided by an external agency. To support stretched internal resources inline with the festival growth.
	Event management software \$5,000 yearly fee	Streamline project management delivery, planning and CRM through the purchase of licenced events management software.
	TOTAL INVESTMENT YEAR 4 = \$72,000 TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$209,000 + overall budget CPI at 2%	

YEAR	FUNDING REQUIREMENT	RATIONALE
5 2025/2026	Festival Director under a full time employment agreement. \$102,000 - 5 days / 12 months	Festival Director to work on the overall project management of the festival and work on artistic programming and the development of local artist programs.
	Site Manager x 2 under a fixed term employment agreement. \$15,000 - 5 days / 3 weeks	NB: programming during the pilot phase to be developed by the Associate and Event Producers. Management of satellite event sites in St Marys and Penrith City Centres.
	Event Crew x 2 under a fixed term employment agreement. \$9,000 - 5 days / 2 weeks	Logistical support of satellite event sites in St Marys and Penrith City Centres.
	Satellite Event Program development and infrastructure. \$60,000 to support both sites	Funding to support a satellite event program and infrastructure requirements in our St Marys and Penrith City Centres.
	Marketing and Engagement Officer under a full time or fixed term employment agreement. \$65,000 - 5 days / 9 months	Manage the festival communications and marketing plan and develop a year campaign and engagement modelling. To support stretched internal resources in line with the festival growth.
	TOTAL INVESTMENT YEAR 5 = \$251,000 TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$460,000 + overall budget CPI at 2%	

YEAR	FUNDING REQUIREMENT	RATIONALE
 2026/2027	Program and Satellite Activations Coordinator under a full time or fixed term employment agreement. \$65,000 - 5 days / 9 months	Develop and manage the festival satellite event series, extending the program to three sites (St Marys, Penrith, Regatta/City Park and local business venues).
	Satellite Event Program development and infrastructure. \$40,000 to support additional site.	Funding to support a satellite event program and infrastructure requirements at Regatta Park and build and support the business venue program.
	Site Manager under a fixed term employment agreement. \$7,500 - 5 days / 3 weeks	Management of satellite event sites at Regatta/City Park.
	Event Crew under a fixed term employment agreement. \$4,500 - 5 days / 2 weeks	Logistical support of satellite event site at Regatta/City Park.
	TOTAL INVESTMENT YEAR 6 = \$117,000 TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$577,000 + overall budget CPI at 2%	
YEAR	FUNDING REQUIREMENT	RATIONALE
 2027/2028	Partnerships & Investment Officer under a full time or fixed term employment agreement. \$65,000 - 5 days / 9 months	Leverage further investment opportunities and build partnerships.
	Capital infrastructure investment. \$50,000	Increase in capital infrastructure costs to support growing festival footprint.
TOTAL INVESTMENT YEAR 7 = \$115,000 TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$692,000 + overall budget CPI at 2%		
YEAR	FUNDING REQUIREMENT	RATIONALE
 2028/2029	Lighting & Site Designer under a fixed term employment agreement. \$25,000 - 5 days / 4 months	Designer to support festival growth, development and implementation.
	TOTAL INVESTMENT YEAR 8 = \$25,000 TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$717,000 + overall budget CPI at 2%	



 
#RealFestival

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