Cover: Mural by Charles Zuber, Franklin Primary School.
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In 2008, the Huon Valley Council developed the Huon Valley 2020 Community Plan. This included the strategic aim of celebrating the arts, heritage and culture:

“There are many places throughout the Valley that are significant to our heritage and cultural identity. These need to be recognised and protected to ensure future generations have the opportunities of insight and empathy with the past to guide and inform the present.

Communities with a strong sense of who they are, who they were and who they might be are rich in social and cultural capital. Telling the stories of the Valley and its people builds understanding and connection. Supporting, promoting and celebrating the Valley’s heritage, arts, artists and artisans will also enhance community life. The Valley’s many halls, parks and open spaces play a vital role in supporting events and celebrations”.¹

A snapshot of the Huon Valley

This strategy reflects the profile of the Huon Valley, taking into consideration its sense of place, changing demographics, evolving community needs and rural lifestyle. This requires a strategic approach to ensure arts and heritage outcomes are relevant to the community over the life of the action plan.

The Environment

• Australia’s southern-most – and Tasmania’s second-largest – municipal area covering about 5,200 square kilometres across a diverse and captivating landscape
• A backdrop of the South West Wilderness Area and World Heritage areas
• Several townships with distinct characteristics
• Diverse climate, landforms and vegetation

The Community

• Population of slightly more than 15,000 people; relatively dispersed
• Comprises people who have lived in the Huon Valley for generations and feel a deep and rich connection with the landscape and its people
• Includes newer residents who have moved to the Huon Valley to take advantage of the environment, and the small-scale agricultural and creative business opportunities

The Lifestyle

• Range of bushland, coastal, riverside and rural environments offering lifestyle options for families, individuals and businesses
• Environment and unique sense of place attracts skilled and creative people
• Geographic beauty and isolation inspires creativity and resourcefulness
• Increasingly popular as a tourist and seachange destination

¹ Huon Valley 2020 Community Plan, Huon Valley Council, pp.11.
CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

The Huon Valley Council recognises the significant value that arts and heritage hold for the unique character of the region, and the enormous social, health and economic benefits that are provided to the community by a strong and vibrant arts and heritage presence. In light of this, in 2011 the Huon Valley Council undertook development of the Arts and Heritage Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2017.

Developing this strategy has provided an opportunity for the Council to review the services and programs it currently supports and to develop a more considered and visionary approach to arts and heritage. The Council’s goal is to most effectively nurture and support the practice of the arts and recognise and protect heritage in the Huon Valley.2

Research and community consultation in the form of a public survey and a number of workshops has formed the basis for developing the strategy and action plan. Consultation focussed on creating a relevant definition of arts and heritage for the Huon region, understanding the different ways in which Huon Valley people value the experience and practice of arts and heritage, and identifying a vision for the future of arts and heritage in the region.

The clearest outcome from the consultation was the priorities for the Huon Valley Council, which should be foremost to support others to provide arts programs and facilities, and to protect and manage heritage.

The resultant Huon Valley Council Arts & Heritage Discussion Paper was released in February 2012 and included a range of recommended strategies to be implemented over a five year period. These strategies were presented to the community for further consideration, with feedback helping to shape this document. The discussion paper is a partnering document to this strategy and action plan, and can be accessed via contacting the Huon Valley Council.

The following people have generously donated their time and expertise to the process of creating this strategy: Councillor Rosalie Woodruff; Posie Graeme-Evans; Michael Lynch; Merlene Abbott; Charles Zuber; Lucinda Wilson; Jane Heather; John Fibbens; Marcia Waller; Emma Coombes; Julie Alderfox, Pip Hankin; Meg Webb; Jane Castle; Jacquie Maginnis; Fran Bladel; Allison Eastland; Pete Smith; Paul Jenkins; Chris Tassell; Kylie Eastley; Edward Arrowsmith; Richard Muir-Wilson; Bradley Williams; Kim Simpson; Charles Rich; Sarah Waight; Paul Davies; and the 70 workshop participants and 165 survey participants.

CASE STUDY #1 LOCAL HERITAGE GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

Numerous volunteer-operated heritage societies exist in the Huon Valley, including the Franklin History Group, the Geeveston Archives and Historical Society, and Cygnet Living History Museum, to name a few. A common vision for these proactive societies is the development of sustainable venues and spaces in which to preserve cultural heritage collections, operate conservation and collection management activities, and provide local and visitor access to historical items and stories.

The Esperance Discovery Centre group in Dover is just one Huon Valley association to strategically investigate this vision, with extensive research into other Australian heritage organisations.

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2 Huon Valley Council 2010 – 2015 Strategic Plan, pp.11.
Why are arts and heritage so important?

It is widely accepted that arts and heritage are a vital component of any vibrant, sustainable and healthy community.

Arts and cultural activities are an important part of the Australian lifestyle, with nearly nine in ten Australians attending at least one selected cultural venue or event during 2009/10. Culture and the arts connect people and build socially inclusive communities, creating opportunities for people to feel valued, and more likely to participate in employment, education, training, and voluntary work.

Wellbeing and social development

The number of cases of self-reported depression and anxiety in the Huon Valley are significantly higher than for broader Tasmania. The A Healthy Tasmania report identifies strong connections between the arts and positive health outcomes, with the arts identified as a means to engage with disadvantaged groups and contribute to healing and rehabilitation. Arts and heritage programs provide a way for community-building, expression, a sense of place and pride in oneself and one’s environment. The arts in particular helps combat social isolation, especially in the older age groups.

Tourism and economic development

Arts and heritage foster creativity and innovation, and are drivers of economic activity, both in terms of product and performance sales, and in increased tourism – the two most-visited destinations in Tasmania in the past year were Port Arthur (heritage) and MONA (art).

Today’s savvy tourists are no longer satisfied with a passive location-based travel experience – they want to be active participants in new cultural experiences. The current models set by Tourism Australia and Tourism Tasmania advocate the promotion of ‘experiences’ such as ‘art and culture’ and ‘gourmet indulgences’.

From left: the best-known product of the region’s rich agricultural heritage; a local potter in his workshop; and a performance at the annual Cygnet Folk Festival.

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4 Huon Valley Profile, Epidemiology Unit, Population Health, September 2011, pp.4.
Arts and heritage in the Huon Valley

The sheer number of survey responses and workshop attendees indicates the importance of arts and heritage to the local community, and the majority of people consulted throughout this project clearly spelled out their sense of ownership and investment in arts and heritage in the Huon Valley.

The arts

From the 165 survey respondents, 42% identified themselves as arts practitioners, with almost half stating that they earn less than $1,000 per year from their arts practice. 56% participate in the arts and a quarter of respondents volunteer for arts activities.

The following are just some of the comments from residents on the value of the arts to the Huon Valley:

“The arts generates a community spirit where the vandalism is much lessened.”

“The arts enrich the community, and offer the community a different way of looking at things. The arts exposes the wider community to creative processes.”

“Creative arts bring together the community, which we so desperately need.”

“Art can beautify, instruct, protest and, if an artist us successful, bring in money and tourism. Art can also lead and bring about change – music and literature can define a culture and a society.”

Heritage

Heritage is valued highly in the Huon Valley region. 96.5% of survey respondents said that heritage is an important part of the Huon Valley area. 55.7% indicated that they visit heritage places or attend heritage activities, and 24.4% indicated that they volunteer for heritage organisations. Six people identified themselves as heritage professionals. Within the survey alone, thirteen heritage organisations were identified.

The following are some of the comments from residents on the value of heritage to the Huon Valley:

“Heritage gives a community a sense of identity and an appreciation of the history of the area in which they live.”

“We are nothing without our past and it is embodied in buildings, artefacts and landscapes. They tell us who we were and who we are now and help us to contextualise ourselves.”

“Heritage is a unique selling point to others and an important piece of the fabric that is the local community/culture.”

“The Valley has changed so much in the last 100 years and I don’t want us to lose the memories. All Tasmanian communities should consider heritage vital.”

“Heritage is emotional and contentious. Our stories are a way of engaging with the youth – we live in one of the most beautiful places in Australia, yet we have the highest youth suicide rate in Australia. We desperately need a sense of place, sense of pride – a way of caring about our culture.”

Southern Design Centre, Geeveston.

The Living Boat Trust, Franklin.
HUON VALLEY STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Huon Valley offers a unique mix of arts and heritage. This uniqueness is based on:

- The small population base relative to the geographic size.
- The remote and rural nature of the region, where a sense of overall cohesion is treasured, yet there is also a desire for the ‘personalities’ of the five major townships/areas to be retained.
- The Valley’s cultural heritage, from indigenous to pioneering/European, from fishing to forestry, from apples to traditional crafts.
- The natural environment, defined by its variableness and World Heritage areas – encouraging creativity and resourcefulness.
- A geography and lifestyle that draws people with skill and creativity.

This uniqueness brings strengths and challenges (and identified risks), the combination of which leads to opportunities for the Huon Valley, and forms the basis of the strategic direction and focus for this Arts & Heritage Strategy & Action Plan.

Huon Valley Arts & Heritage Strengths

- Depth and diversity of arts and heritage within Huon Valley.
- Inspirational rural landscapes, vistas, waterways and a healthy natural environment.
- Geographic spread of artists across the Valley – many well-recognised outside of the region.
- Number of arts and heritage based organisations, each with a unique focus.
- Diverse and renowned arts and heritage based festivals and events.
- Strong skills, expertise and talent in existing population – and a demonstrated ability to attract new arts/heritage focused residents.
- Growing interstate and international recognition as a significant tourism destination.
- Committed and enthusiastic volunteers.
- Strong core of community champions for local arts and heritage.

The Huon Valley Theatre Company is the most prominent performing arts organisation in the region, hosting two annual performances and engaging participation from throughout the area. The company operates from the Huonville Town Hall, and has a flexible arrangement with the Council, with a percentage of ticket sales comprising venue rent. The company successfully obtains grants and contributes their own funds towards small infrastructure and venue upgrades.

CASE STUDY #2

HUON VALLEY THEATRE CO.
Huon Valley Arts & Heritage Challenges

- Lack of understanding of value and contribution of arts/heritage to the community.
- Limited financial resources and capacity to contribute towards arts and heritage sectors.
- Geographic spread of population – and perceived distance from Hobart.
- Limited access (public transport).
- Cultural divisions: ie. forestry debate, low socio-economic issues.
- Changing demographics – mix of ‘traditional’ families and new residents.
- Limited communication between practitioners, and about existing arts and heritage opportunities.
- Underuse of public venues for arts and heritage.
- Changing face of industry for communities – from a reliance on traditional industries, where to now?
- Economic, employment and social wellbeing challenges.

Huon Valley Arts & Heritage Risks

- Further decline of arts activities in areas such as Dover and Geeveston.
- Loss of significant heritage.
- Loss of momentum gained by AHAC thus far by not proactively valuing and engaging with the arts and heritage sector.
- Undervaluing arts and heritage as a means of capitalising on recent national and international tourism attention for the region.
- Ignoring the status-quo of an arts and heritage community that feels under-supported and under-valued.
- Continued ‘burnout’ of arts and heritage volunteers.

Huon Valley Arts & Heritage Opportunities

- Improve council and community resource capacity and structure to implement the five year Strategy.
- Utilise and promote the highly-skilled AHAC to create positive arts and heritage outcomes.
- Increase arts and heritage awareness within the Council in order to grow industry leadership and partnerships.
- Improve recognition and value of arts and heritage as legitimate industries that drive positive social and economic change.
- Continue to build awareness of and strengthen arts and heritage experiences.
- Promote arts and heritage to improve local access and participation.
- Support residents to build grass-roots arts and heritage capacity.
- Provide suitable infrastructure to improve communication and to capitalise and encourage opportunity and investment.
- Be innovative in resourcing and supporting arts and heritage.
- Take advantage of 2012 Community Consultation and Communication Strategy review to improve communications between Council and the arts/heritage community.
- Upgrade existing Council venues to enable a broader range of high quality arts outcomes.
- Improve connections between artists.
VISION STATEMENT
An innovative community that supports, values and enjoys a vibrant and sustainable arts industry, and recognises and protects heritage.

MISSION STATEMENT
To recognise and protect the heritage and cultural identity of the Valley and expand arts related activity.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Connected  Inclusive  Innovative  Open & Accountable  Sustainable

FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES
An expanded, supported and sustainable arts industry/creative community.  A protected and promoted built and natural heritage.
Geeveston Archives & History

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<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Treasurer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEOFF BEAN</td>
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GOAL 1: Make the most of Council’s human and infrastructure resources to achieve the best possible arts and heritage outcomes for the Huon Valley.

HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL:

1A. Appoint an Arts and Heritage Officer to engage with, connect and support arts and heritage organisations and practitioners in the Huon Valley.

1B. Support and facilitate, in consultation with the community and council budgeting, the staged upgrading of an existing venue within each main township into a dedicated multi-purpose arts venue that meets national OH&S and accessibility standards.

1C. Support community heritage organisations in the development and maintenance of viable heritage facilities and/or spaces.

GOAL 2: Develop Council’s policies and reports, and current programs and activities in the areas of arts and heritage sector support and engagement.

HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL:

2A. Include heritage assets in the Huon Valley Planning Scheme.

2B. Review the Community Grants Program.

2C. Provide advice to community groups and individuals to overcome their administration and insurance issues.

2D. Increase the depth and breadth of workshops and training in the Huon Valley.

2E. Develop statements of identity and themes for each township that will inform the heritage schedule in the Huon Valley Planning Scheme.

2F. Instigate a public art program.

CASE STUDY #3

CYGNET FOLK FESTIVAL

The Cygnet Folk Festival is the Huon Valley’s best-known annual arts event. It spans three days in January and presents an international-standard musical program which draws thousands of visitors to the town. The festival’s ongoing program and financial position are secure, however staffing is difficult as the festival’s extensive volunteer and administration requirements regularly ‘burns out’ volunteers.
GOAL 3: Identify appropriate communication and marketing strategies to facilitate community engagement and enable feedback on Council’s arts and heritage activities.

HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL:

3A. Produce an online and hard copy arts register/directory, to link local artists and provide information.

3B. Engage the community early in decision-making on arts and heritage issues and initiatives, using the Community Consultation and Communication Strategy as a basis.

3C. Promote the Arts & Heritage Advisory committee as an avenue for community feedback and ideas.

GOAL 4: Identify opportunities for partnerships between Council and main Huon Valley arts and heritage sector groups, the community, other governments, and the private sector.

HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL:

4A. Strengthen the Huon Valley arts and heritage volunteering sector.

4B. Support arts and heritage businesses through greater promotion and communication.

4C. Develop existing relationships with Tasmanian arts and heritage bodies.

4D. Develop existing relationships with local governments.

4E. Develop relationships between AHAC and Huon Valley Council staff.

GOAL 5: Define the Council’s role in the area of arts and heritage tourism.

HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL:

5A. Incorporate community feedback into the Huon Trail campaign for the years 2012–2017.

5B. Promote the Huon Valley arts and heritage sectors for tourism purposes.

5C. Increase the share of the Huon Valley in government-based and independent Tasmanian tourism marketing material.
# ACTION PLAN
FOR THE HUON VALLEY COUNCIL AND AHAC

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Identify ways to implement and advise Council on employing a full-time Arts and Heritage Officer starting from the 2013 financial year.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Work with Arts and Heritage Officer on arts and heritage matters, including the carriage of this action plan.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Full-time Arts and Heritage Officer in employment and supported by AHAC.</td>
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<td>2F</td>
<td>Prepare strategy and funding for public art program.</td>
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<td>Implement public art program.</td>
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<td>Increase in commission, acquisition and installation of public artworks.</td>
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<td>4C</td>
<td>Encourage Tasmanian Regional Arts connections in the Huon Valley.</td>
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<td>Expansion of arts activities in Huon Valley region, supported by TRA.</td>
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<td>1C</td>
<td>Link community heritage organisations with resources and professional advice and support for establishing viable heritage facilities and/or spaces.</td>
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<td>[eg, link with Arts Tasmania’s Roving Curator, Huon Valley heritage professionals etc]</td>
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<td>Increase in outcomes for heritage organisations.</td>
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AHAC

- Workshop and establish revised definitions of heritage and arts.

- Review definitions of heritage and arts.

- Review definitions of heritage and arts.

- Functional and relevant definitions of heritage and arts made publicly available.

- Full-time Arts and Heritage Officer in employment and supported by AHAC.

- Increase in outcomes for heritage organisations.
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<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Create defined AHAC roles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All committee roles required for this action plan are filled and sustained.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Assess <em>Heritage Act</em> 1995 to provide template for heritage schedule assessment criteria. Consult with community on criteria (with HVC).</td>
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<td>Working criteria in place for heritage schedule.</td>
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<td>2A</td>
<td>Research viability of a comprehensive heritage study for the region.</td>
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<td>Long-term plan for comprehensive heritage study.</td>
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<td>2E</td>
<td>Work with relevant committees to develop statements of identity for each township.</td>
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<td>Statements of identity taken into consideration in HVC branding, planning, etc.</td>
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<td>4E</td>
<td>Create formal links with HVC tourism staff and tourism bodies to ensure that arts and heritage are fairly represented in future Huon Valley branding.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arts and heritage fairly represented in Huon Valley branding.</td>
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*AHAC (CONT.)*
### DR DRIVER GOAL july 1 2012 – june 30 2013

#### 1A
- Consider budget allocation to appoint a part-time Arts and Heritage Officer.

#### 2B
- Review community grants program to ensure optimal outcomes for arts and heritage (eg investigate quota, better promotion etc).

#### HVC STAFF MEMBER

#### 1B
- Council officers liaise with appropriate committees to identify most appropriate Council venue within each major township for arts use, and assess what upgrades may be required when funding is available to make it a viable community arts venue.

#### 2C
- Support local organisations with their arts and heritage training and workshops (with AHAC) (eg assist with promotion).

#### 2D
- Provide advice to local organisations to assist with overcoming issues with public liability and administration, etc.

### MEASURABLES

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Consider budget allocation to appoint a part-time Arts and Heritage Officer.</td>
<td>Consider budget allocation to employ a full-time Arts and Heritage Officer.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Full-time Arts and Heritage Officer in employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>Review community grants program to ensure optimal outcomes for arts and heritage (eg investigate quota, better promotion etc).</td>
<td>Implement changes to community grants program.</td>
<td>Review effectiveness of changes to community grants program.</td>
<td>Implement further changes to program if necessary.</td>
<td>Review effectiveness of changes to program.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A better representation of arts and heritage in each grant funding round.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>Council officers liaise with appropriate committees to identify most appropriate Council venue within each major township for arts use, and assess what upgrades may be required when funding is available to make it a viable community arts venue.</td>
<td>Upgrade venues for arts purposes, where needed.</td>
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<td>Increase in number of arts activities in these venues.</td>
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<td>2C</td>
<td>Support local organisations with their arts and heritage training and workshops (with AHAC) (eg assist with promotion).</td>
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<td>Increase in number of arts and heritage workshops and training courses.</td>
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<td>2D</td>
<td>Provide advice to local organisations to assist with overcoming issues with public liability and administration, etc.</td>
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<td>Decrease in reported instances of insurance and administration issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HVC STAFF MEMBER (CON’T)</td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Establish parameters and format for arts register, and establish an updating process. Get register up and running. Investigate potential further use of the register information.</td>
<td>Maintain and promote register, linking with other organisations such as Arts Tasmania where possible.</td>
<td>Maintain and promote register, develop sustainability model.</td>
<td>Maintain and promote register, develop sustainability model.</td>
<td>Survey Huon Valley artists. Register to be largely self-sustaining.</td>
<td>Greater connectedness between artists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2B</td>
<td>Review community on the criteria for the heritage schedule in the Huon Valley Council Planning Scheme.</td>
<td>Commence work on the heritage schedule for Huon Valley Planning Scheme.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed heritage schedule.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3B</td>
<td>Ensure community feedback from this consultation is included in the 2012 review of the Community Consultation and Communication Strategy.</td>
<td>*AHAC has workshop and survey reports containing relevant feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community feedback shows improved consultation.</td>
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<td>3C</td>
<td>Publicise the existence and purpose of the Arts and Heritage Advisory Committee.</td>
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<td>Increase in public consultation with AHAC.</td>
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<td>4A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liaise with Volunteering Tasmania to identify ways in which to support and recognise arts and heritage volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.</td>
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<td>A more resilient, resourced and recognised arts and heritage volunteer sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B</td>
<td></td>
<td>Add arts and heritage categories to Huon Valley Business Directory listings, arts and heritage initiatives to the business newsletter.</td>
<td>Continue promoting arts and heritage via HVC communication channels. Measure impact through ‘click-rates’, page visits etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase in arts and heritage presence in Huon Valley Council collateral. Increase in ‘click rates’ on arts and heritage articles in any ennewsletters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foster partnerships with Tasmanian cultural bodies and state-wide events.</td>
<td>(eg. Ten Days on the Island Festival, Arts Tasmania Smart Map, Tasmanian Regional Arts, Wooden Boat Festival, National Trust Heritage Festival.)</td>
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<td>Expansion of and greater connectedness with cultural activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4D</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arts &amp; Heritage Officer and/or Tourism and Community Development staff connect with Tasmanian Cultural Development Officer Association and Kingborough Council Arts and Cultural Development Officer for peer support.</td>
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<td>HVC staff informed, proactive, and supported in the areas of arts and heritage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HVC STAFF MEMBER (CONT.)</td>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Tourism staff and AHAC work with Huon Valley/Kingborough Steering Committee to review scope of listings and advertising model in the Huon Trail. (AHAC to be involved)</td>
<td>Tourism staff work with Huon Valley/Kingborough Steering Committee to look at innovating delivery and presentation of Huon Trail. (AHAC to be involved)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review effectiveness of changes to arts and heritage portion of Huon Trail collateral.</td>
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<td>5B</td>
<td>Ensure arts and heritage practitioners and experiences are not only promoted externally, but also via the Council website, through community newspapers, and in business forums.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase in arts and heritage presence in Huon Valley Council collateral.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5C</td>
<td>Work with Destination Southern Tasmania and Huon Trail to increase Huon Valley arts and heritage promotion in state-wide and interstate campaigns.</td>
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<td>Increase in arts and heritage promotion in Tourism Tasmania materials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>