City of Ryde
Lifestyle and opportunity
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**ATTACHMENTS FOR: AGENDA NO. 7/25
COUNCIL MEETING**

Meeting Date: **Tuesday 24 June 2025**
Location: **Council Chambers, Level 1A, 1 Pope Street, Ryde and Online**
Time: **6.00pm**

ATTACHMENTS FOR COUNCIL MEETING

Item

12 **ADOPTION OF THE CITY OF RYDE SOCIAL STRATEGY AND CREATIVITY STRATEGY 2025-2030**

City of Ryde

CREATIVITY STRATEGY
BACKGROUND REPORT

2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Ryde Council would like to acknowledge the Wallumedegal Aboriginal people, a clan of the Darug Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Darug Nation and extend that respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We honour the protection of one of the longest continuous Indigenous cultures and beliefs and pay our respects to the history, culture, language, and contemporary developments of the Indigenous people.

The City of Ryde Council celebrates the inclusion of all people and honours their rights and contribution to Country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Ryde would like to thank the community, local artists and creative community groups, creative businesses, service providers and government agencies who have participated in our consultation and development of the *City of Ryde Creativity Strategy 2025-2030* and its Background Report. Your invaluable insights and perspectives towards future creative opportunities across our City is much appreciated.

Of note is also the contribution and support of our elected Councillors and popularly elected Mayor towards our important work on social and cultural planning and strategies.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The City of Ryde's Creativity Strategy Background Report 2025 (the Background Report) serves as a comprehensive and foundational document that underpins the development of the Creativity Strategy 2025-2030 (the Strategy). As the City of Ryde (Our City) continues to evolve, the importance of fostering a thriving creative ecosystem becomes more evident. This Background Report is designed to offer a thorough analysis of the current creative landscape within our City and provide critical insights into the opportunities and challenges that inform the Strategy's development. Through data-driven research, community feedback, a review of strategic context and existing cultural and creative assets, this Report lays the groundwork for Ryde's vision of:

"A vibrant and inclusive community where creativity is the cornerstone of everyday life, and our community has the opportunity to participate in diverse forms of creative expression and shared storytelling".

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Background Report is to offer an in-depth understanding of the factors that shape the Creativity Strategy 2025-2030. By providing a snapshot of Ryde's current cultural and creative landscape and a review of the strategic context and community's priorities, we aim to identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities within our City that need to be addressed in the coming years.

The report focuses on understanding key demographics, creative activities, and the local creative sector and its economic contributions, while also projecting potential future developments for the City and its community.

This document is intended to inform decision-makers, stakeholders, and the general public about the foundational data and strategic insights that will guide the City of Ryde's creativity initiatives over the next five years. Ultimately, the Report ensures that the Strategy is realistic, driven by data, and responsive to the aspirations of our community.
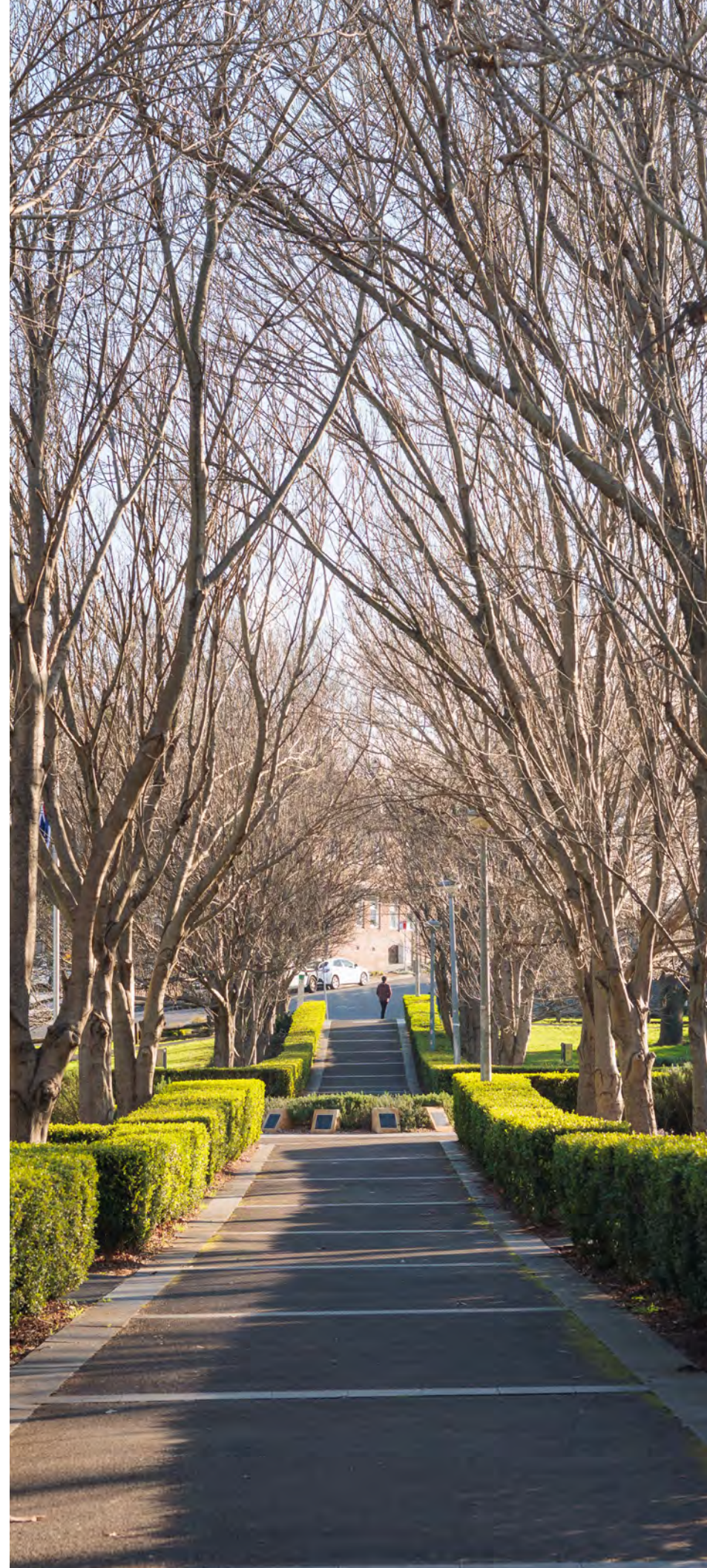
HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This Background Report is structured to provide a clear and accessible overview of the key areas that influence the development of the Creativity Strategy 2025-2030. Readers are encouraged to approach the document section by section, each of which provides essential information:

(1) STATE OF OUR CITY AND COMMUNITY
This section provides an overview of the City's cultural and creative spaces, establishing the context for the creative landscape. It includes an analysis of the community's demographics and highlights key creative activities that define our local culture. Additionally, this section offers a brief projection of the community and City's future.

(2) OUR CREATIVE SECTOR
This section begins with an overview of our local economy, followed by a focus on targeted creative industries. It provides a snapshot of the economic impact of the creative industries on Ryde's local economy and workforce dynamics.

(3) STRATEGIC CONTEXT
This section provides a summary of the strategic goals for fostering creativity at national, state, regional, and local levels.

(4) STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND OUTCOMES
This section presents an overview of the consultation process, including the activities, principles, communication pathways, participants, and key findings from community and stakeholder engagement.

By reading this document, you will gain an insight into how City of Ryde's creative sector is currently positioned and how we plan to shape its future, in alignment with the community's aspirations.

1 STATE OF OUR CITY AND COMMUNITY

OUR CITY

The City of Ryde Local Government Area (LGA) is located 12 kilometres from Sydney's CBD and covers an area of about 40 square kilometres. It is divided into three wards (East, Central and West), as shown in Figure 1, with some areas distributed across multiple wards.

Figure 1. The City of Ryde wards and suburbs (City of Ryde 2025)

EAST WARD

The East Ward includes the following areas:

- Chatswood West
- Macquarie Park
- Gladesville
- East Ryde
- North Ryde
- Putney
- Ryde
- Tennyson Point

CENTRAL WARD

The Central Ward includes the following areas:

- Denistone East
- Meadowbank
- Macquarie Park
- North Ryde
- Ryde
- West Ryde

WEST WARD

The West Ward includes the following areas:

- Denistone
- Denistone East
- Denistone West
- Eastwood
- Macquarie Park
- Marsfield
- Melrose Park
- West Ryde

OUR CREATIVE SPACES

This section highlights the key cultural and creative spaces across our City, mapping out their distribution and showcasing their role in fostering creativity, learning, and supporting creative production and participation. It also acknowledges the Macquarie Park Innovation District and local educational institutions, which offer significant opportunities to grow and develop our creative sector.

THERE ARE ALSO A RANGE OF INSTITUTIONS WE CAN PARTNER WITH INCLUDING:

- **Macquarie University:** The University's facilities include an art gallery, history museum, and several multipurpose halls. It also offers educational programs in:

    - Performing Arts and Entertainment Industries

    - Music Studies

    - Screen Practice and Production

    - Media, Culture and Communications, and

    - Arts and Social Sciences.

- **TAFE NSW:** There are two TAFE campuses in the City of Ryde, offering educational programs in Design and Media, Arts, and Information and Communication Technology.

- **Macquarie Park Innovation District:** This district is home to both Australian businesses and the headquarters of multinational organisations across a variety of high-growth and deep technology sectors.

We are also home to many parks, laneways and plazas that can be activated through creative activities and events.

3
THEATRES

2
CINEMAS

7
LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE LOCATIONS

5
LIBRARIES

15
HIREABLE HALLS AND MEETING ROOMS

21
LICENCED COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

SEVERAL HISTORIC SITES

KEY
- Art Gallery
- Museum
- Theatre
- Cinema
- Live Music Performance
- Library
- Hall and Meeting Room
- Historic Site
- Macquarie University (Arts, design and media education and facilities)
- TAFE (Arts, design and media education and facilities)
- Town Centre

1. HISTORIC SITE ALONG PARRAMATTA RIVER
2. TIMBER WHARVES
3. SHEPHERDS BAY COMMUNITY CENTRE
4. HISTORIC SITE ALONG PARRAMATTA RIVER
5. INSTITUTE of APPLIED TECHNOLOGY-DIGITAL
6. MEADOWBANK TAFE COLLEGE
7. RYDE PUMPING STATION
8. STATION STREET HALL
9. STATION STREET MEETING ROOM
10. WEST RYDE LIBRARY
11. WEST RYDE COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL
12. WEST RYDE COMMUNITY CENTRE MEETING ROOM
13. RYDE EASTWOOD LEAGUES CLUB
14. RIVERVIEW HOUSE AND OUTBUILDINGS
15. FOREST HALL (BRUSH FARM HOUSE)
16. BRUSH FARM
17. EASTWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL

18. SHAFTSBURY PLACE
19. EASTWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE MEETING ROOM
20. EASTWOOD NIGHT MARKETS
21. EASTWOOD WOMEN'S REST CENTRE
22. EASTWOOD LIBRARY
23. RYDE TAFE COLLEGE
24. THE RETREAT
25. ADDINGTON MUSEUM
26. ADDINGTON HOUSE
27. RYDE LOCAL COURT
28. WILLANDRA
29. CLUB RYDE
30. HUNTERS HILL THEATRE
31. NAVAL REFIT CENTRE
32. RYDE PARK ROTUNDA
33. EVENT CINEMAS TOP RYDE
34. RYDE LIBRARY

35. NORTH RYDE SCHOOL OF ARTS COMMUNITY HA
36. NORTH RYDE SCHOOL OF ARTS MEETING ROOM
37. NORTH RYDE LIBRARY
38. MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY TWILIGHT MARKETS
39. MARSFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE
40. LIGHTHOUSE THEATRE
41. LOTUS THEATRE
42. EVENTS CINEMAS MACQUARIE
43. THE GOVERNOR HOTEL
44. LACHLAN'S LINE AUDITOIUM
45. NORTH RYDE RSL COMMUNITY CLUB
46. SUTTON MEMORIAL TRAMWAY MONUMENT
47. GLADESVILLE DRILL HALL
48. GLADESVILLE MEETING ROOM
49. GLADESVILLE LIBRARY
50. BAYVIEW HOTEL
51. ART GALLERY NORTH RYDE
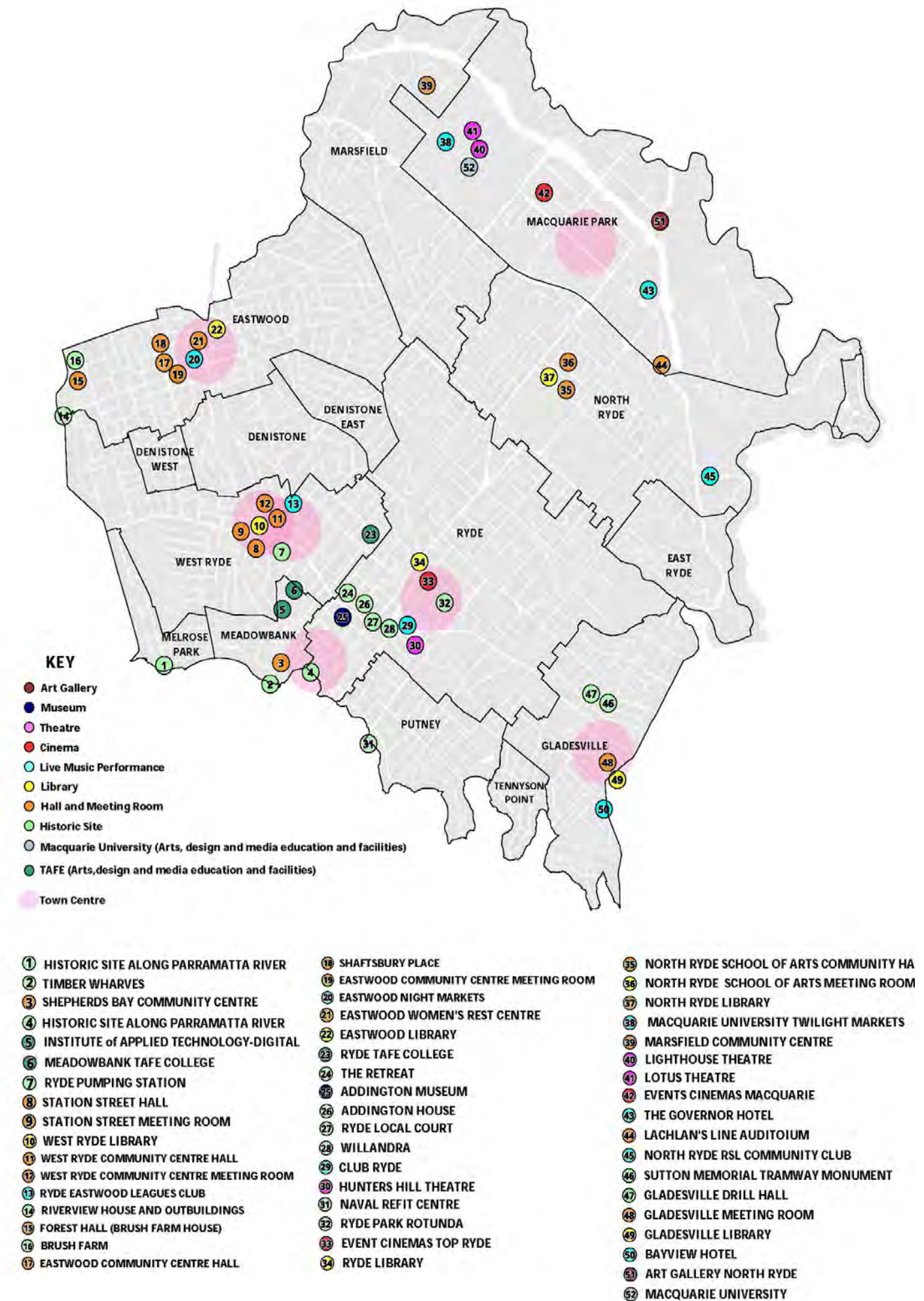52. MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Figure 2. Cultural and creative spaces and facilities (City of Ryde 2025)

OUR COMMUNITY[1]

OUR GROWING POPULATION

As shown in Figure 3, the population of our City was 129,123 in 2021 and has grown to 138,720 in 2024. The most populated suburbs are Ryde, Macquarie Park Innovation District, and Eastwood. Our population is expected to reach 156,964 by 2030 and 183,352 by 2041, which means an increase of 18,244 people by 2030 and 44,632 people by 2041, compared to 2024 population.
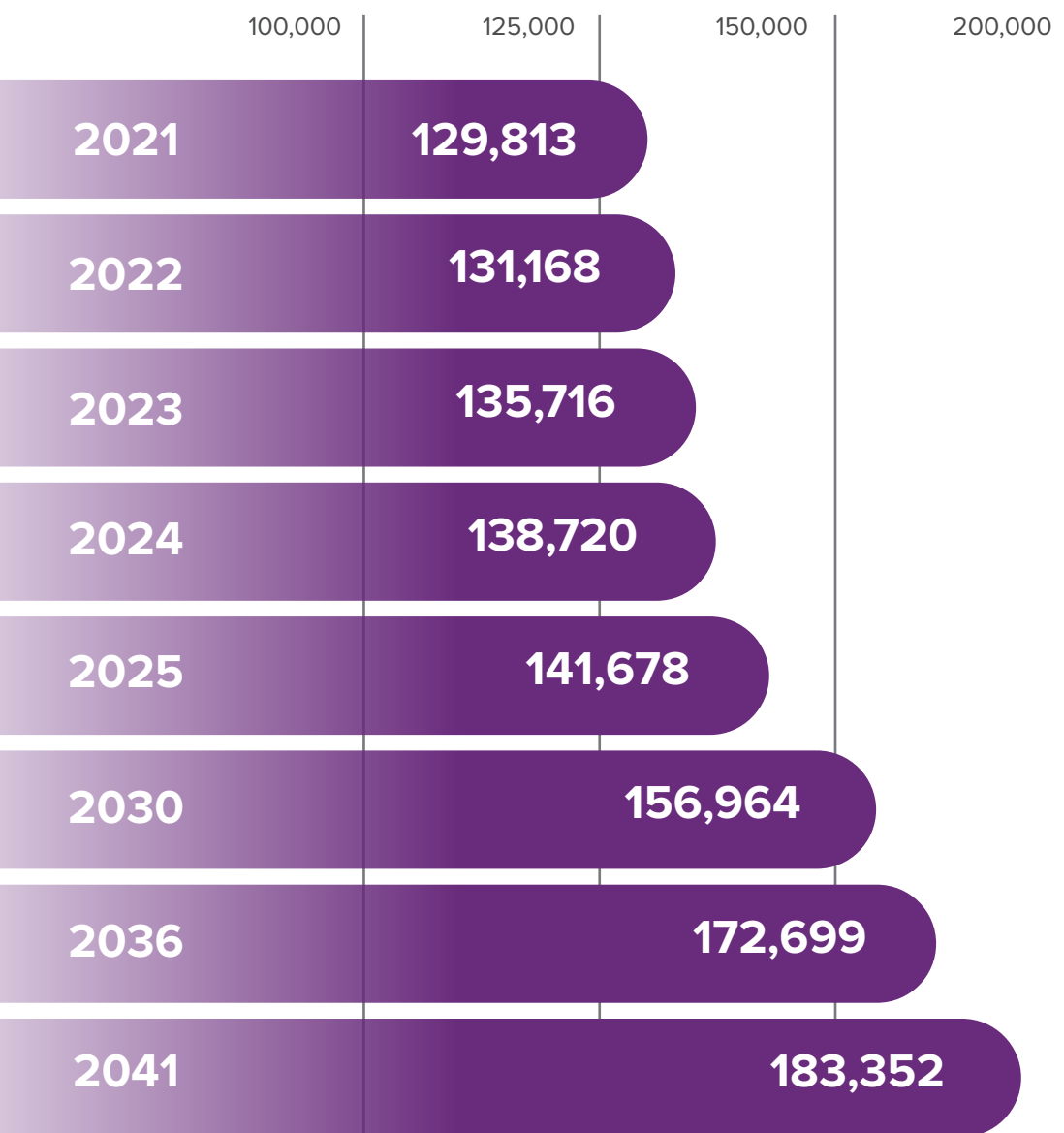
PROJECTED POPULATION

2021	129,813
2022	131,168
2023	135,716
2024	138,720
2025	141,678
2030	156,964
2036	172,699
2041	183,352

Figure 3.Projected population 2021 to 2041 (Data source: REMPLAN future population forecast)

[1] *All data presented in this section is sourced from REMPLAN and .id Community Profile based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing 2021, Retrieved from https://www.remplan.com.au/ and https://profile.id.com.au/. The population projection data is sourced from REMPLAN future population forecast.*

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The gender distribution in our City is nearly balanced, with males making up 49% and females 51% of the population. As shown in Figure 6, this balance is consistent across different age groups.

The largest age group in our City is 30-34 years, making up 10% of the total population. This is followed by those aged 35-39 years (9%) and 25-29 (8.5%). While the percentage share of the population decreases as age increases, particularly after retirement age (65), the number of residents over 65 has increased from 19,439 in 2021 to an estimated 20,596 in 2024, making up 15% of the total population.

Children aged 0 to 4 and 5 to 9 make up 5.63% and 5.74% of the population, respectively. The total population under 15 has also grown slightly from 20,966 in 2021 to an estimated 22,260 in 2024, making up 16% of our increasing population.
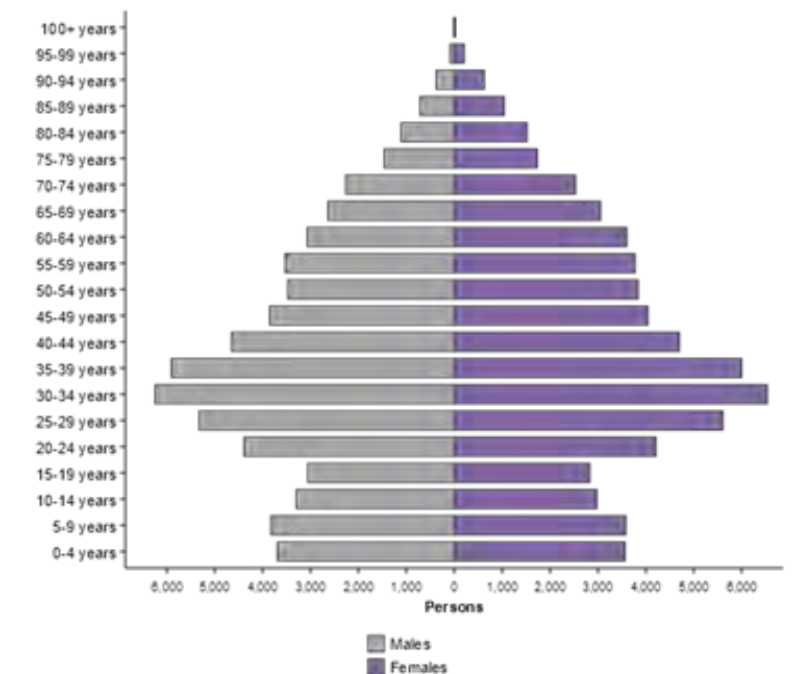

Figure 4. Age-gender pyramid distribution 2021 (Data source: REMPLAN based on ABS Census 2021)
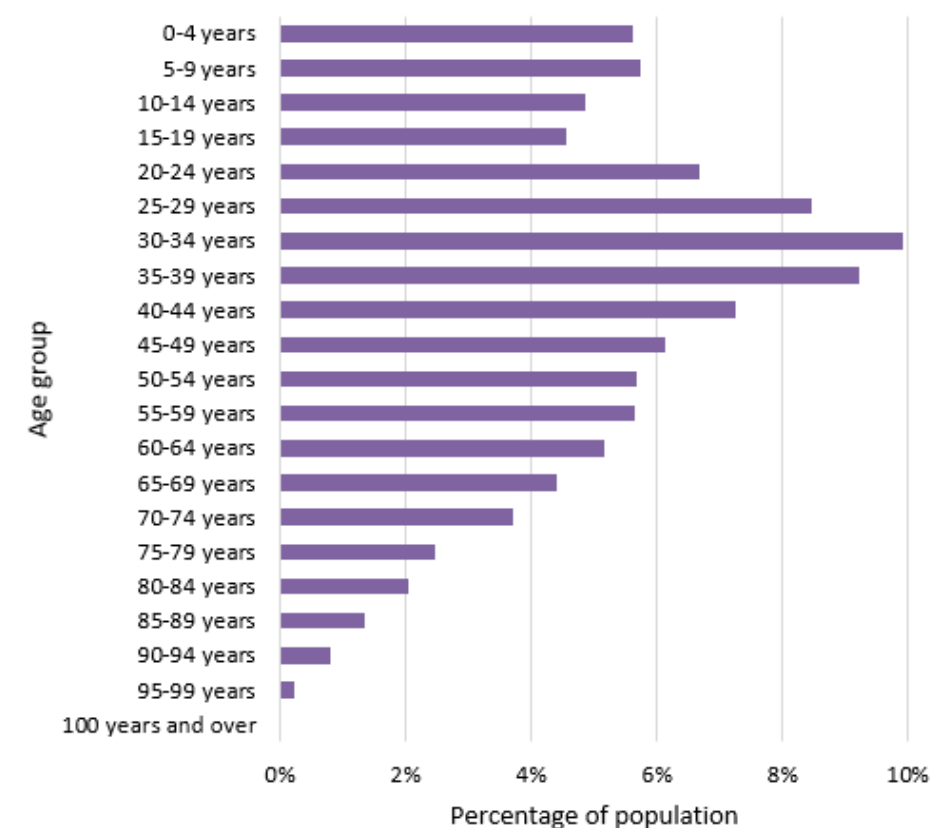

Figure 5. Age breakdown (Data source: REMPLAN based on ABS Census 2021)

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

- In 2021, there were around **50,800** households in our City, with an average household size of **2.47**. Our City has a variety of household types, with the largest group being couples with children, making up **32%** of households in 2021, slightly lower than the Greater Sydney average of **34%**. Lone-person households counted for **26%**, which is higher than the Greater Sydney average of **23%.**

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Our City has a rich cultural diversity, including:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents**, who made up **0.5%** of the population in 2021.

- **Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities**, who were born overseas, made up **49%** of our population in 2021, compared to **39%** in Greater Sydney. The top three countries of birth are China, India, and South Korea. Of the overseas-born residents, **23%** arrived in Australia between 2016 and 2021.

- In 2021, **49%** of residents spoke a language other than English at home, compared to **37%** in Greater Sydney. The top three languages spoken at home are Mandarin, Cantonese, and Korean. Additionally, **8%** of the population reported having difficulty speaking English.

- While our community practises a range of religions, Christianity remained the largest religion, with **44.2%** of residents identifying as Christian in 2021.

HEATH, WELLBEING, AND SUPPORT WITH CORE ACTIVITIES

- In 2021, around **20%** of our population reported having one or more long-term health conditions, which is slightly lower than the Greater Sydney average of **23%.** The most common long-term health conditions reported in 2021 were mental health related, affecting **6%** of the population.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our City reported higher rates of long-term health conditions, with about **36%** experiencing at least one. In line with the overall community, mental health conditions were the most common, affecting **17%** of this group.

- In 2021, about **5%** of our population reported needing assistance with daily activities, due to disability.

EDUCATION

- Education is highly valued in our community. As shown in Figure 6, **60%** of our population had a Bachelor's degree or higher in 2021. However, **5%** of young people aged 15 to 24 were not engaged in education or employment[2].
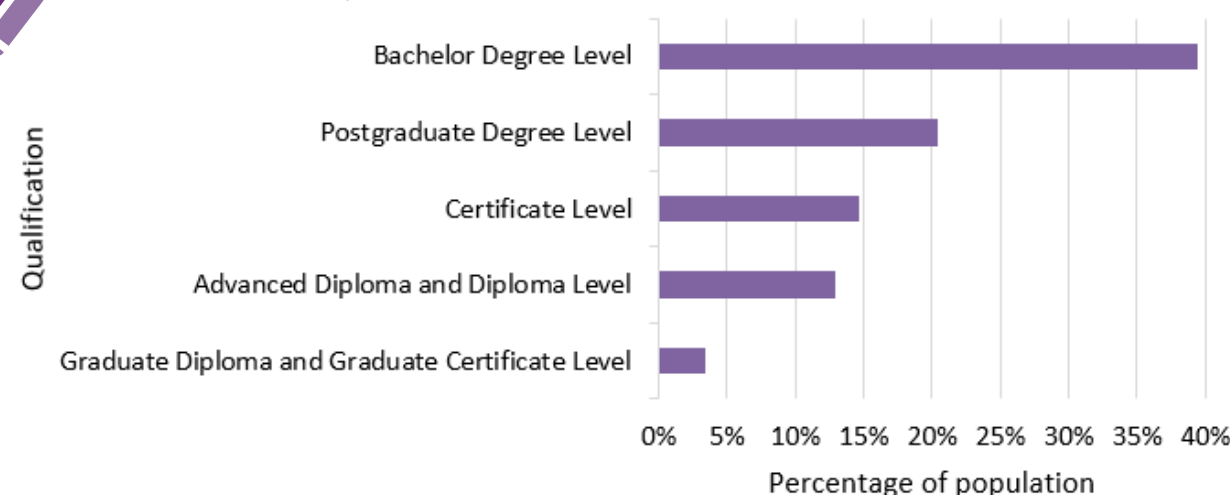

Figure 6. Highest qualification (Data source: REMPLAN based on ABS Census 2021)

[2] Engagement in employment and education looks at the level of participation by age and sex of the population in the labour market, or full or part-time education. A full time employed, or full-time student would be fully engaged, while part-time students may be fully engaged if they are also employed, or partly engaged if they are not working.

EMPLOYMENT

- In 2021, **94%** of our labour force[3] was employed across various industries. The top three industries were 'Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services,' 'Health Care and Social Assistance,' and 'Education and Training.'

- Male workers made up **51%** of the employed labor force, slightly more than female workers at **49%**. The largest group of employed residents were those aged 35-39 (**14%**), followed by those aged 40-44 (**13%**).

- The overall participation rate[4] for residents in our City was **64%** in 2021, with an unemployment rate of around **5%**, which is similar to the Greater Sydney average.

Workforce movements

- **21%** of our local workers both live and work within the LGA, while **79%** live outside the area, mostly in Parramatta, Blacktown, and Hornsby.

- Of the residents who work, **68%** travel outside the City for their job. The top three areas where they work are Sydney, Parramatta, and Willoughby.

Employment status of people with disabilities

- In 2021, about **87%** of people in the City of Ryde who needed assistance and were part of the labor force were employed. Their unemployment rate was **13.3%**, slightly higher than the Greater Sydney average of **13.1%**. Their participation rate in the labor force was **9.3%**, also slightly higher than the Greater Sydney rate of **9.1%**.

Employment status of recently arrived migrants and CALD communities

- In 2021, **90%** of City of Ryde residents who recently arrived from overseas and were in the labour force were employed. The unemployment rate for this group was **9.5%**.

- Overall, **94%** of non-English speaking residents in Ryde who were in the labour force were employed, with an unemployment rate of **6%**.

Employment status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- In 2021, **94%** of our residents who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were employed, with an unemployment rate of **6%**.

VOLUNTARY WORK

- In 2021, about **13%** of our population reported doing some form of voluntary work, which is higher than the Greater Sydney average of **12%**.

INCOME AND HOUSING STRESS

- In 2021, around **8%** of households in our City earned less than **$650** per week, while **41%** earned more than **$3,000** per week. Of low-income households, **11%** had a mortgage, **29%** rented privately, and **13%** lived in social housing.

- The median weekly household income in our City was **$2,189**, slightly higher than the Greater Sydney median of **$2,099**. The median weekly rent in our City was **$460**.

- An estimated **360 people** were homeless in the City of Ryde in 2021.

HOUSING

- Our City provides a range of housing options for residents. In 2021, **50%** of residents lived in separate houses, **16%** in medium-density housing, and **34%** in high-density housing.

- Among non-private dwellings, the two most common types were nursing homes **(26%)** and residential colleges or halls of residence **(25%)**.

[3] Persons aged 15+, who are classified as either employed or unemployed.
[4] Population in labour force

SNAPSHOT OF OUR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Our City offers a diverse range of events and programs designed to foster creative expression and provide opportunities for the community to connect. These initiatives help build a strong sense of belonging and encourage residents to share their stories. This section provides a snapshot of the key initiatives organised between 2023-2024.

ARTISTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

The City of Ryde is home to a thriving artistic community, with over **300** artists registered with the City of Ryde Council (Council), including **207** local artists. This network contributes to the City's rich cultural landscape and helps shape its identity.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

The Council hosts a wide range of cultural programs and events throughout the year. Key highlights include:

- **38** major Council-organised events, attracting approximately **160,000** attendees annually.
- Over **657,169** visits to our five libraries.
- **39,733** attendees participating in **1,708** in-person and online library programs and events.
- **16,209** attendees at children's StoryTime and Baby RhymeTime sessions at local libraries.

In addition to Council-run events and programs, over **80** live music performances have been held on a monthly basis in registered clubs, hotels, and night markets.

SUPPORT FOR CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The City of Ryde is committed to supporting the local creative community. This includes:

- Offering professional development workshops to local artists and creative groups.
- Providing grants to encourage creative activities, such as:
  - Arts and Creativity Grants
  - Events Grants
  - Venue Hire Grants

Additionally, Council communicates with the arts and creative community through a monthly electronic newsletter, which reaches approximately **1,500** subscribers.

FUTURE STATE OF OUR COMMUNITY AND CITY

INCREASE OF 18,244 BY 2030

POPULATION GROWTH

- Our population is projected to reach 156,964 by 2030 and 183,352 by 2041, representing an increase of 18,244 people by 2030 and 44,632 by 2041.[5] Since 2021, our community has experienced shifts in demographics, with significant growth seen in both the ageing population and the number of young families, children, and teenagers.
- These changes will lead to a greater demand for social infrastructure, such as schools, community facilities, public spaces, and local services. It will also be important to provide more inclusive activities for all demographic groups and improve access to services for senior residents and people with disabilities.

Macquarie University and two TAFE NSW campuses

LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Our local economy is flourishing, anchored by the business development activities occurring in Macquarie Park Innovation District, a globally competitive hub that provides a wide range of employment opportunities and significantly contributes to our economic output. The City of Ryde also benefits from its proximity to a skilled talent pool, with Macquarie University and two TAFE NSW campuses, including the Institute of Applied Technology – Digital.
- The City of Ryde's Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028[6], along with the Night-time Economy Strategy 2024-2028[7], will shape our economic growth moving forward. Vibrant town centres, such as Eastwood, West Ryde-Meadowbank and Gladesville, will be further revitalised through masterplans and the place activation projects currently in progress.
- As part of our future planning, we will focus on supporting local creative industries through partnerships and collaboration.

[5] REMPLAN future population forecast, Retrieved from https://www.remplan.com.au/
[6] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/3/publications/economic-development/economic-development-strategy.pdf
[7] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/publications/economic-development/night-time-economy-strategy.pdf

2 OUR CREATIVE SECTOR

The local creative sector plays an essential role in shaping the creative landscape of our City. This sector encompasses a broad ecosystem, as detailed in the City of Ryde's Creativity Strategy 2025-2030.

Local artists, community groups, and organisations are vital to driving creative community initiatives. At the same time, creative industries contribute to our creative landscape by offering meaningful opportunities for artistic expression, driving job creation, fostering innovation, and promoting community engagement.

The City of Ryde's Creativity Strategy 2025-2030 focuses on the following key creative industries[8]:

INFORMATION MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

- PUBLISHING (EXCEPT INTERNET AND MUSIC PUBLISHING)
    - NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING
    - MAGAZINE AND OTHER PERIODICAL PUBLISHING
    - BOOK PUBLISHING
- MOTION PICTURE AND SOUND RECORDING
    - MOTION PICTURE AND VIDEO PRODUCTION
    - MOTION PICTURE AND VIDEO DISTRIBUTION
    - MOTION PICTURE EXHIBITION
    - POST-PRODUCTION SERVICES AND OTHER MOTION PICTURE AND VIDEO ACTIVITIES
    - MUSIC PUBLISHING
    - MUSIC AND OTHER SOUND RECORDING ACTIVITIES
- BROADCASTING (EXCEPT INTERNET)
    - RADIO BROADCASTING
    - FREE-TO-AIR TELEVISION BROADCASTING
    - CABLE AND OTHER SUBSCRIPTION BROADCASTING
- INTERNET PUBLISHING, BROADCAST, WEB-SEARCH AND DATA SERVICES
    - INTERNET PUBLISHING AND BROADCASTING
- LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION SERVICES
    - LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

- ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES
- OTHER SPECIALISED DESIGN SERVICES
- ADVERTISING SERVICES
- PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICES

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- ARTS EDUCATION

OTHER SERVICES

- PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM PROCESSING

ARTS AND RECREATION SERVICES

- HERITAGE, CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS
    - MUSEUM OPERATION
    - PERFORMING ARTS OPERATION
    - CREATIVE ARTISTS, MUSICIANS, WRITERS AND PERFORMERS
    - PERFORMING ARTS VENUE OPERATION

OVERVIEW OF OUR LOCAL ECONOMY[9]

Our City has a thriving economy, with a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of $20.27 billion. As illustrated in Figure 7, the top three industry sectors contributing to the total value-added in the Ryde LGA are Information Media and Telecommunications (15.8%), Wholesale Trade (13%), and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (11.6%).
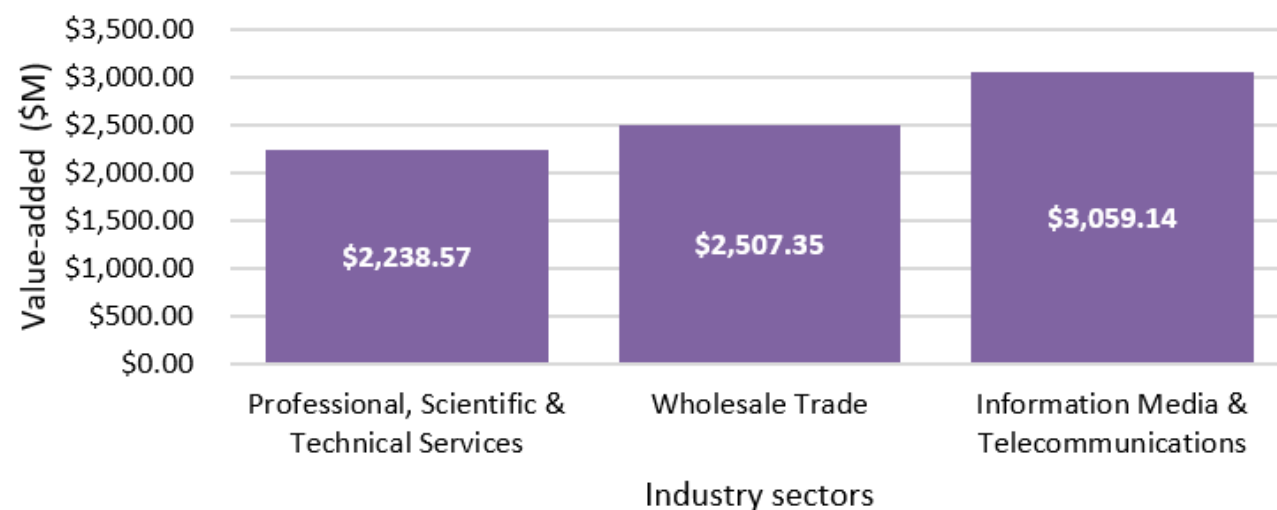

Figure 7. Top value-added industries in City of Ryde (REMPLAN 2024)

Our local economy supports an estimated 91,764 jobs. The largest contributors to employment are Health Care and Social Assistance (15%), Wholesale Trade (13.1%), and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (12.5%).

Figure 8. Largest employment sectors in City of Ryde (REMPLAN 2024)

[9] *All data presented in this section is sourced from REMPLAN and is derived from the information breakdown provided by the ABS. Retrieved from https://www.remplan.com.au/*

OVERVIEW OF OUR CREATIVE INDUSTRY SECTOR[10]

VALUE-ADDED[11]

Local creative industry sectors contribute $2.02 billion in value-added to the economy, representing 10.5% of the total. The top three creative sectors driving this value are Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (48.3%), Internet Publishing, Broadcasting, and Websearch Data Services (23.5%), and Broadcasting (13.6%).
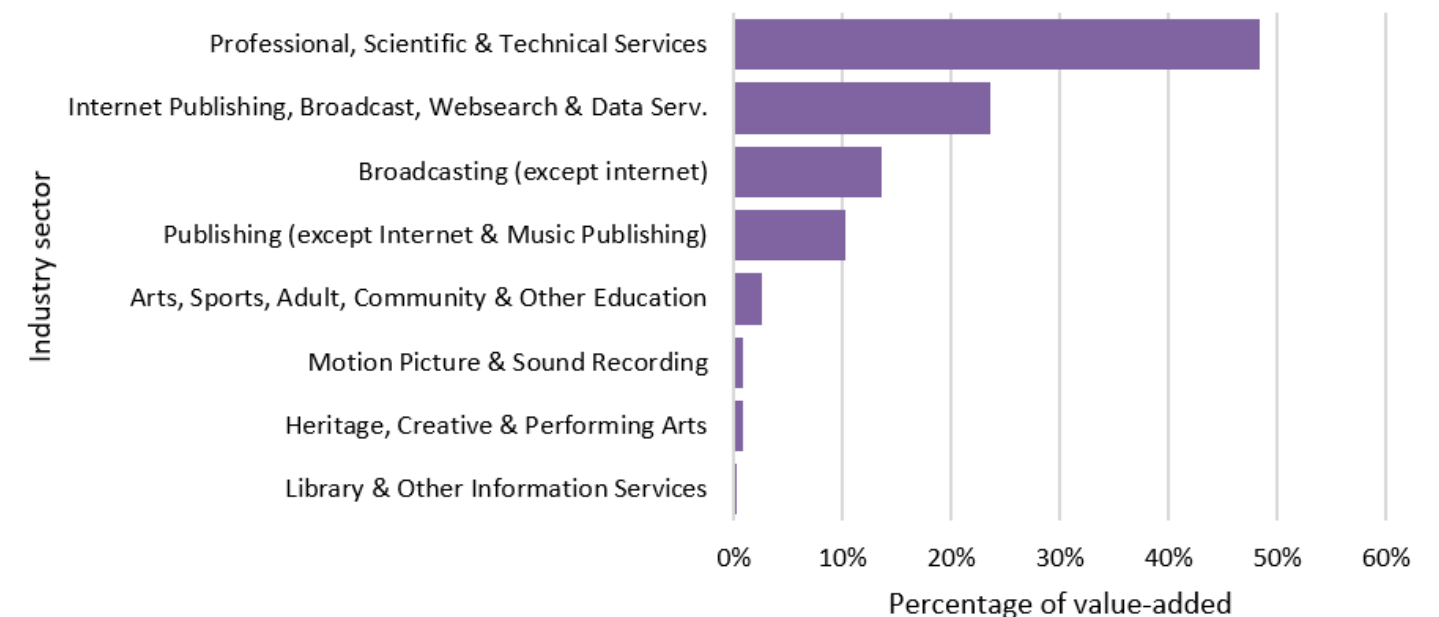

Figure 9. Percentage breakdown of value-add of creative industry sectors to City of Ryde's economy (REMPLAN 2024)

[10] *All data presented in this section is sourced from REMPLAN and is derived from the information breakdown provided by the ABS. Retrieved from https://www.remplan.com.au/*

[11] *The value-added is presented at aggregation level of all industry sectors included in the following categories defined by ABS:*
• Professional, Scientific and Technical Services • Internet Publishing, Broadcast, Websearch and Data Services.
• Broadcasting (except internet) • Publishing (except Internet and Music Publishing) • Arts, Sports, Adult, Community and Other Education
• Heritage, Creative and Performing Arts • Motion Picture and Sound Recording • Library and Other Information Services
Notably, other industry sectors contribute to the value-added from the target creative industries, due to limitations in the further breakdown of information provided by ABS.

SPECIALISED SECTORS[12]

As shown in Figure 10, 2024 estimates indicate that our creative industry sectors are highly specialised in Broadcasting and Publishing.[13]
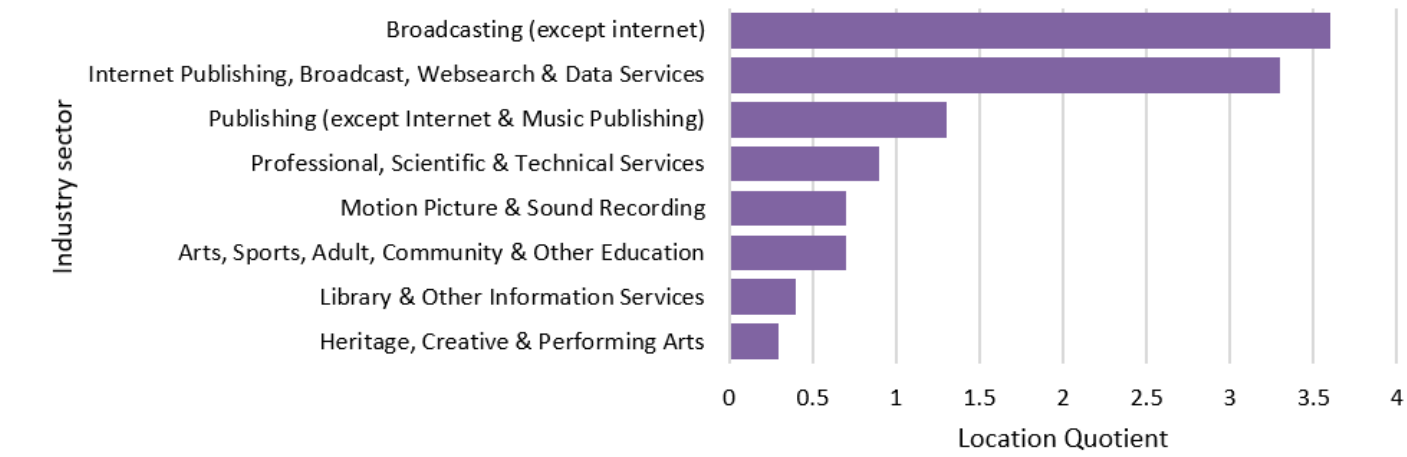

Figure 10. City of Ryde's specialised creative sectors (REMPLAN 2024)

CREATIVITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO TOURISM

As shown in Figure 11, several of our creative industry sectors make significant contributions to tourism-related outputs, including Information Media and Telecommunications, and Arts and Recreation Services. These sectors generate gross revenue by meeting the demand created by tourists visiting the LGA.
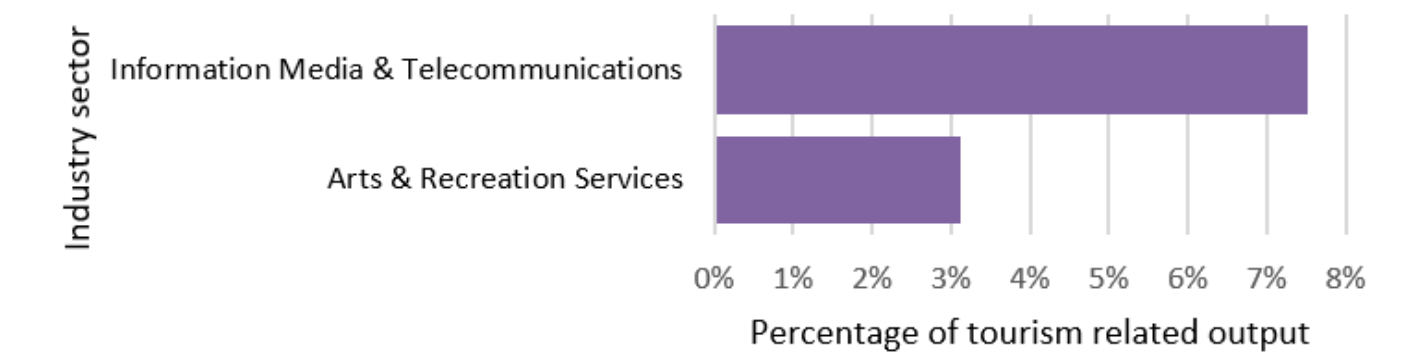

Figure 11 – Tourism related output across creative industry sector (REMPLAN2024)

KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Our local creative sectors provide an estimated 2,350 jobs across the City. As shown in Figure 12, the creative industry sector with the largest employment share is Broadcasting (45%), followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (22%). In comparison, creative occupations within Professional, Scientific and Technical Services represent the largest share (48%) of the creative workforce across Greater Sydney.
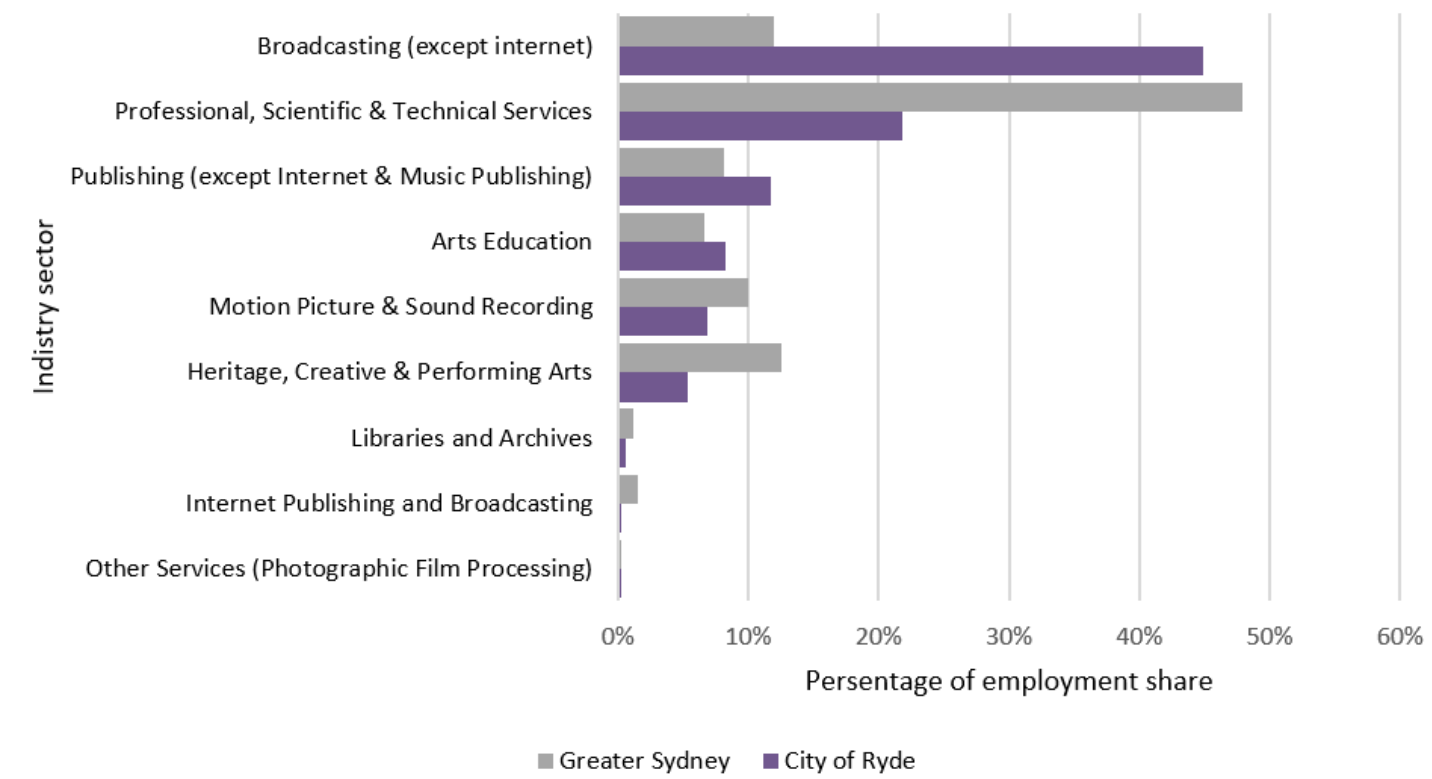

Figure 12. Largest creative employment sector comparison between City of Ryde and Greater Sydney (REMPLAN2024)

OUR CREATIVE WORKFORCE

The total number of creative workers in our City is estimated to be around 2,350. Our creative workforce is diverse, consisting of both resident workers and incoming workers from other LGAs, primarily Parramatta and the City of Sydney.

The workforce is balanced in terms of gender, with 51% female and 49% male. The largest age group is those aged 30 to 39. Approximately 30% of our creative workers are culturally and linguistically diverse[14], and the majority (60%) hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

In terms of income, 18% of our creative workers earn between $2,000 and $2,999 weekly, while 15% earn more than $3,000 per week. On the lower end, 10% of creative workers earn less than $500 per week.

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[12] *Location Quotient (LQ) indicates the industry sectors that are specialised within an LGA by calculating concentrations of industries within an LGA, relative to concentrations across New South Wales. LQ greater than 1 represents a degree of specialisation in the local economy. LQ less than 1 shows that the industry is less specialised in the local economy relative to New South Wales (as a benchmark). LQ equals 1 indicates that industry specialisation is the same in the local economy as New South Wales.*

[13] *The estimated specialisation is presented at aggregation level of all industry sectors included in the following categories defined by ABS:*
• Professional, Scientific and Technical Services • Internet Publishing, Broadcast, Websearch and Data Services.
• Broadcasting (except internet) • Publishing (except Internet and Music Publishing) • Arts, Sports, Adult, Community and Other Education
• Heritage, Creative and Performing Arts • Motion Picture and Sound Recording • Library and Other Information Services
Notably, other industry sectors contribute to the estimated specialisation from the target creative industries, due to limitations in further breakdown of information provided by ABS.

[14] *This estimation is based on non-English language spoken at home.*

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Creativity Strategy 2025-2030 is designed to align with the development directions, objectives, and planning priorities outlined in key strategic documents at local, state, regional, and national levels. This alignment ensures that the Strategy supports and contributes to broader goals.

This section highlights the key strategic directions that guide planning for creativity across our City.

NATIONAL DIRECTIONS

NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

The National Cultural Policy 2023, Revive: A Place for Every Story, A Story for Every Place[15], seeks to reposition arts, culture, and heritage as core values for Australia's future. It offers a framework to support the growth and success of creative workers, organisations, and audiences. The Policy is structured around five key pillars:

- **First Nations first** - Emphasises the importance of acknowledging and respecting First Nations stories as central to Australia's arts and culture. This pillar includes the telling of First Nations histories and narratives across galleries, libraries, archives, and museums.

- **A place for every story** - Affirms that art and culture are for everyone, irrespective of age and background. It focuses on ensuring access, equity, participation, and representation, while recognising the vital role art and culture play in supporting health and wellbeing.

- **Centrality of the artist** - Acknowledges the significant contribution Australia's cultural and creative workforce makes to the nation's economic and social wellbeing.

- **Strong cultural infrastructure** - Recognises the importance of various organisations—governmental, not-for-profit, and private sector—in sustaining and promoting the creative arts.

- **Engaging the Audience** - Ensures that stories resonate with and reach audiences through the platforms they engage with. This includes promoting investment in digital and media literacy.

These pillars form the foundation for actions that drive the future growth and development of arts and creativity across the City of Ryde, contributing to creative outcomes in line with the goals of the National Cultural Policy.

CREATIVE AUSTRALIA STRATEGY: CREATIVITY CONNECTS US

Creative Australia is the cornerstone of the Australian government's National Cultural Policy and plays a key role in achieving its targeted outcomes. The Creative Australia Strategy 2024-2028[16] (Creativity Connects Us) outlines five strategic priorities that align with the National Cultural Policy's pillars to foster the growth of arts and creativity. These priorities are:

- First Nations creativity is integral to Australian arts and culture, supported by self-determined decision-making.

- A dynamic creative sector that reflects the diverse stories of contemporary Australia.

- Sustainable careers for our creative workforce, with control over their creative assets.

- Arts and culture are valued and recognised as essential to all Australians.

- Engaging local and global audiences in meaningful Australian creative experiences.

These strategic priorities guide Creative Australia's annual Corporate Plan, which details strategies for achieving each objective, along with performance measures to track progress.

Our Creativity Strategy is fully aligned with the objectives of the Creative Australia 2024-2028 Strategy, ensuring a diverse and dynamic creative sector and embedding creativity into our community's everyday life.

NATIONAL ARTS AND DISABILITY STRATEGY

The National Arts and Disability Strategy 2009[17] promotes universal accessibility to arts and creative activities, ensuring that people with disabilities can fully participate. The Arts and Disability Strategy is focused on four key areas:

- Access and participation: Reducing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from engaging with facilities, services, and resources, both as audiences and participants.

- Arts and cultural practice: Enhancing access to arts and cultural funding, presentation opportunities, professional development, and career pathways for artists with disabilities.

- Audience development: Raising the profile of artists with disabilities to increase visibility and recognition.

- Strategic development: Ensuring that the needs and aspirations of people with disabilities are considered and addressed in the creation of policies and programs.

EQUITY: THE ARTS AND DISABILITY ASSOCIATED PLAN

The Australian Government's Equity: the Arts and Disability Associated Plan 2024[18], focuses on promoting equity and access to the arts for artists, screen practitioners, arts workers, and audiences with disabilities. It seeks to champion disability representation and equity across the arts, screen, and cultural sectors, aligning with Australia's Disability Strategy. The Plan outlines priorities to ensure the voices of individuals with disabilities are central in both its development and implementation. This initiative aims to foster a more inclusive and accessible arts sector, recognising and supporting the significant contributions of people with disabilities in all creative fields.

In alignment with both the National Arts and Disability Strategy and the Arts and Disability Associated Plan, our Creativity Strategy promotes and enhances access to, and participation in, arts and creative opportunities for people with disabilities.

NSW GOVERNMENT DIRECTIONS

CREATE NSW: ARTS AND CULTURAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Create NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework 2021-2025[19] leverages the strengths and aspirations of residents, artists, cultural workers, and arts organisations across diverse communities to shape a vision for the state's cultural and creative future. The Framework emphasises achieving excellence through innovation, fostering community connections, revitalising infrastructure, recognising First Nations arts and cultures, and promoting strong leadership.

Additionally, the Framework aims to increase access to opportunities by encouraging partnerships and participation, engaging with young people, supporting artists' professional development, and strengthening creative businesses and organisations.

In alignment with the priorities outlined above, our Creativity Strategy aims to revitalise existing infrastructure that supports creative activities, foster innovation, and honour First Nations arts and history. The Strategy also emphasises the empowerment of the local creative sector.

CREATE NSW: CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+[20] provides a framework to develop cultural infrastructure in NSW beyond 2025, focusing on community activation, the visitor economy, innovation, and job creation.

The Plan's strategic priorities include:

• Considering cultural infrastructure as a driver for vibrant communities and economies.

• Ensuring access to cultural spaces for diverse groups, including First Nations communities, young people, people with disabilities, senior residents, and culturally diverse communities.

• Promoting collaboration within the cultural sector.

• Building impact through partnerships.

The Plan's geographic priorities are:

• Defining the Greater Sydney as a leading cultural destination, emphasising creativity and innovation.

• Leveraging the diversity of cultural identities across NSW.

This Cultural Infrastructure Plan directs our Creativity Strategy to focus on providing affordable and accessible creative spaces and fostering partnerships.

NSW ARTS, CULTURE AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES POLICY – CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Creative Communities 2024-2033[21] places arts, culture, and creative industries at the heart of NSW. By supporting artists, creatives, cultural organisations, and creative industries, the policy aims to transform the state's cultural and creative ecosystem. It is built on five guiding principles, including:

• Prioritising First Nations cultures – Recognising and respecting First Nations stories as central to NSW's arts and cultural landscape.

• Appreciating creative industries – Acknowledging the value of NSW's arts, culture, and creative industries, including artists and practitioners.

• Advocating for the value of culture – Ensuring equitable access to the creative industries for all.

• Supporting sustainable growth – Promoting the growth of arts, culture, and creative industries.

• Sharing our creativity with the world – Expanding audiences for NSW's creative works on a national and international level.

NSW CONTEMPORARY MUSIC STRATEGY

The NSW Contemporary Music Strategy 2025-2034[22] plans to grow and strengthen the NSW music industry by reaching new audiences and fostering community connections. The Strategy is built on three main goals:

• Building a stronger music industry, by supporting First Nations music and improving skills.

• Expanding audiences for NSW's music, through promoting and reaching international markets.

• Supporting local music communities to thrive.

This NSW Strategy directs City of Ryde and its Creativity Strategy to boost the music industry and promote local artists and musicians.

REGIONAL DIRECTIONS

GREATER SYDNEY REGION PLAN – A METROPOLIS OF THREE CITIES

The Greater Sydney Region Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities 2018[23] envisions three distinct cities—Western Parkland City, Central River City, and Eastern Harbour City—to accommodate the region's growing and evolving population. The Plan aims to enhance liveability, productivity, and sustainability by ensuring residents can live within 30 minutes of jobs, education, healthcare, and essential services.

It emphasises infrastructure development to meet projected growth and community needs, and highlights the importance of collaboration between government, businesses, and communities to achieve the best outcomes. The Plan serves as a guide for implementing strategies across the five districts of Greater Sydney, including the City of Ryde.

[19] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-05/ARTS-NSW_Cultural-Policy-A5_13-May_web-1.pdf
[20] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/CIP_Accessible%201.pdf
[21] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-12/creative-communities-arts-culture-and-creative-industries-policy.pdf
[22] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2024-12/nsw-contemporary-music-strategy-2024.pdf
[23] https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/a-metropolis-of-three-cities

GREATER SYDNEY 2056 - NORTH DISTRICT PLAN

Our City is part of the North District, and its social, cultural, and creative planning is informed by the Greater Sydney 2056 - North District Plan[24]. The Creativity Strategy aligns with key priorities from the North District Plan, particularly Priority No. 4, which focuses on fostering healthy, creative, culturally rich, and socially connected communities. Our Strategy supports the Plan's objectives, including:

• Ensuring communities are healthy, resilient, and socially connected (Objective 7).

• Promoting culturally rich, diverse neighbourhoods across Greater Sydney (Objective 8).

• Celebrating the arts and supporting creative industries and innovation (Objective 9).

CITY OF RYDE DIRECTIONS

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Council's Community Strategic Plan 2028[25] (CSP) is a 10-year roadmap that reflects the community's insights and needs. It breaks down both current and future requirements into seven key strategic directions for the development of our City. These directions and delivery indicators are detailed in the four-year Delivery Plan, with specific actions outlined in the one-year Operational Plan.

The key directions guiding the Plan include establishing:

• A vibrant and liveable City

• An active and healthy City

• A natural and sustainable City

• A smart and innovative City

• A connected and accessible City

• A diverse and inclusive City

• An open and progressive City

The strategic direction for a 'diverse and inclusive City' emphasises the building of an engaged and connected community, celebrating culture and heritage, and ensuring accessible community facilities. The direction for a 'vibrant and liveable City' focuses on creating vibrant neighbourhoods and great places that are designed for everyone.

The City of Ryde Creativity Strategy aligns with the CSP and supports its strategic directions and objectives, particularly those that contribute to creative outcomes for our community.

LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT

The Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020[26] (LSPS) outlines a 20-year vision for our City, aligning with regional plans like the North District Plan and A Metropolis of Three Cities, as well as NSW state policies. At the local level, the LSPS is shaped by community input and strategic directions, as outlined in the CSP for addressing community needs.

The LSPS sets the framework for land use planning and guides all planning decisions to shape the community's vision. It defines development targets, planning priorities, and key actions. Relevant priorities to our Creativity Strategy include:

• Delivering safe events for the community

• Providing multi-purpose community facilities

• Protecting and enhancing our City's cultural heritage, including historic buildings and places of natural significance

The City of Ryde Creativity Strategy contributes to this long-term vision by advocating and planning for the delivery of cultural and creative outcomes.

OTHER COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

The City of Ryde Creativity Strategy aligns with and supports other key Council strategies and plans, all contributing to the delivery of social, cultural and creative outcomes for our community. These include[27]:

• City of Ryde Social Plan

• City of Ryde Social and Cultural Infrastructure Framework

• City of Ryde Local Infrastructure Strategy

• City of Ryde Halls and Facilities Strategy

• City of Ryde Library Service Strategic Plan

• City of Ryde Disability Inclusion Action Plan

• City of Ryde Reconciliation Action Plan

• City of Ryde Events Plan

• City of Ryde Live Music Plan

• City of Ryde Economic Development Strategy, and

• City of Ryde Night-time Economy Strategy.

[24] https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-04/north-district-plan.pdf
[25] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v1/publications/corporate-services/city-of-ryde-2028-community-strategic-plan.pdf

[26] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/publications/planning/lsps/planning-ryde-local-strategic-planning-statement-march-2020.pdf
[27] For further information see https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Council/Plans-and-Publications

4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PHASES AND ACTIVITIES

To inform the development of the Creativity Strategy 2025-2030, Council initiated a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of our local residents, as well as the creative sector.

As shown in Figure 13, a variety of engagement activities were conducted in 2024 and 2025 to gather feedback from the community and stakeholders on the current and future creative landscape of the City of Ryde.

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 1

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Survey:
- Online community survey
- Online service providers survey
- Online interactive map to gather the community's place-based comments
- Community consultation boards at Council events and festivals

Drop-in sessions:
- Drop-in sessions for the general community and creative community groups

Focus groups:
- Focus groups with service providers and government agencies, including agencies responsible for delivering and supporting cultural and creative outcomes, as well as agencies responsible for delivering essential infrastructure (social, cultural, economic)

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 2

Council internal consultation:
- Workshops with Council staff
- Workshops with Councillors

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 3

Validation and final consultation:
- Community and stakeholder consultation through public exhibition

Figure 13. Stakeholders' engagement phases and activities

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRINCIPLES

The stakeholder engagement strategy was guided by Council's principles of timely, informative, and transparent communication, promoting inclusive and purpose-driven engagement, and encouraging participation from all. It emphasised two-way dialogue with stakeholders while safeguarding participants' privacy.

Key risks were identified and addressed, including the use of anonymous data collection, diverse and accessible consultation methods, multilingual materials, clear communication of objectives, and validation of stakeholder input. Additionally, Council offered in-language assistance through translated materials and access to interpreters.

COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

A variety of communication channels were used to promote the new Creativity Strategy, raise awareness of the engagement phases and activities, and encourage feedback. These included:

• A Have Your Say page and events webpage, offering background information on the Strategy and details on how to get involved.

• eNewsletters and The Weekly Times, with links to engagement opportunities.

• Flyers distributed at key community facilities, events, and festivals, along with downloadable posters for service providers to share with their clients.

• A storyboard at in-person engagement sessions to display project details.

• Regular posts on the City of Ryde's social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram) to encourage feedback.

• Direct emails and phone calls to targeted networks and service providers to promote engagement opportunities

WHO WE ENGAGED WITH

We engaged with over 500 stakeholders, identified through comprehensive stakeholder mapping, to ensure diverse representation. Key stakeholder groups included:

• Local residents

• Local artists and creative community groups

• Cultural and creative service providers

• NSW Government agencies responsible for delivering cultural and creative outcomes and essential infrastructure

• Peak bodies delivering cultural and creative outcomes

• Representative from First Nations communities, and

• City of Ryde Council staff and Councillors.

KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

The feedback, collected through diverse engagement methods and consultations with the community and stakeholders, was analysed to uncover key themes and recurring insights. It reflects the current challenges and opportunities, along with future priorities and aspirations for improving the cultural and creative landscape of the City of Ryde. This section outlines the main points shared by the community and stakeholders.

THERE ARE BARRIERS WHICH LIMIT ACCESS TO CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

The feedback from the community highlighted that the most popular creative activities within the City of Ryde in the past 12 months were library events and programs, along with performing arts events, such as dance and theatre performances, music concerts, and movies. However, some participants noted that they attended creative activities outside of the Ryde area, particularly events associated with the arts, design and technology, as well as exhibitions in museums and galleries. Challenges preventing participation in local creative activities included a lack of awareness, distance from events and inadequate transport options, such as insufficient parking and accessibility.

"There is so much untapped potential in Ryde."

~ Community workshop participant

"Creativity comes from the bottom-up."

~ Community workshop participant

Stakeholders emphasised the need for greater, more equitable access to creative spaces and services across the LGA. They called for the better distribution of activities throughout the area, with a particular focus on providing accessible venues for creative production and events. Additionally, they suggested more affordable spaces for creative showcases.

Further suggestions from the community included leveraging underutilised facilities and repurposing vacant spaces for creative activities. They believed such improvements would ensure a more inclusive and accessible creative landscape, allowing for a wider range of residents to engage with and benefit from cultural and creative opportunities.

OUR COMMUNITY VALUES THE CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Stakeholders expressed the belief that inclusivity and diversity could be more effectively highlighted through a broader range of creative events and activities. While many participants recognised that the arts and creative activities in the City of Ryde offer social inclusion, there was a strong desire for events that foster greater intergenerational and cross-cultural engagement. They highlighted the need for activities that bring together different age groups and people from cultural backgrounds, enabling them to interact, share experiences, and celebrate diversity.

"There is a large multicultural group within Ryde that can be represented through the arts. There is plenty of room for new activations and opportunities, especially among younger people."

~ Community survey respondent

"Ryde is a melting pot of multiculturalism."

~ Community workshop participant

To enhance a sense of community and belonging, stakeholders emphasised the importance of designing events and activities that cater to diverse demographics. Ryde could create more cohesive and vibrant spaces for social interaction that offer opportunities for different generations and cultures to collaborate and connect. Such initiatives would not only promote cultural exchange but also contribute to a more inclusive environment, fostering stronger relationships within the community and enriching the cultural fabric of the area.

OUR COMMUNITY WANTS TO LEAD CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of informal and unstructured events in fostering neighbourly relationships and creating a sense of social connection and belonging. There was a strong desire for more community-led cultural and creative activities, driven by local artists, creative groups, and volunteers.

Participants noted the need for greater awareness among volunteers and artists about how to engage and collaborate on local opportunities and events. Council was seen as playing a key role in facilitating these initiatives by acting as a liaison between creative groups, volunteers, local artists, and businesses.

Providing appropriate facilities for community-led activities and events was identified as a priority. Stakeholders recommended that Council prepare clear guidelines for community-led events to ensure smoother planning and better engagement.

CREATIVITY PLAYS A CENTRAL ROLE IN BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

"There are two things that bring community together – art and music. They are great ways to connect with each other."

~ Community workshop participant

"Community and creativity are grassroots."

~ Community workshop participant

Stakeholders highlighted the crucial role that creative activities play in connecting the community and fostering social cohesion. They emphasised the need to create more opportunities for collaboration, communication, and cultural exchange through these activities. Feedback suggested that a strong focus should be placed on building partnerships between local government, creative industries, service providers, and community groups to enhance the accessibility and reach of these activities. Participants believed that, by fostering these collaborations, Ryde could cultivate a more inclusive and interconnected community, where diverse groups can come together to share knowledge and celebrate creativity.

ACCESS TO SUPPORT, SPACES AND NETWORKS HELPS GROW OUR CREATIVE SECTOR
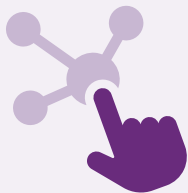
Stakeholders highlighted that, while Ryde's creative sector is diverse, there is a lack of connection and support for local artists. Artists face barriers in engaging with community events and spaces, due to insufficient connections with other artists, service providers, and Council. To build Ryde's identity as a creative hub, stakeholders emphasised the need for greater collaboration and stronger ties to creative opportunities. Stakeholders also suggested linking local artists with creative businesses and organisations in the area, as they often work with creative practitioners from outside of Ryde.

"Collaboration and partnership are key to supporting our services and clients."

~ An agency participated in focus group

"There are some artists at the professional level residing at the City of Ryde, but the LGA has yet to seize the fantastic opportunity to get them involved in art programs and events."

~ Community survey respondent

It was discussed that Council can support local artists by prioritising them in procurement for Council-led events, creating platforms and spaces to showcase local creative work, and offering grants. Improved communication and professional development for local artists were also considered critical to ensuring Ryde's creative sector flourishes.

Stakeholders advocated for greater investment and collaboration within the creative sector to cultivate a self-sustaining artistic community. It was discussed that fostering partnerships with creative businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies would help build a connected and dynamic creative ecosystem.

OUR COMMUNITY WANTS MORE FIRST NATIONS ARTS EXPERIENCES

There was a call for Council to actively support and engage with First Nations artists, creative groups, and businesses when developing the creative sector, organising activities, or advocating for connections to Country through creativity.

CREATIVITY CAN BUILD A UNIFYING LOCAL IDENTITY

Cultural diversity and heritage were recognised as key strengths of the City of Ryde. There was a desire to further embrace and showcase Ryde's cultural and creative diversity, building a unifying identity that reflects its multicultural and artistic community.

"Keen to make Ryde a creative destination."

~ Community workshop participant

According to stakeholders, this would not only foster a sense of identity for residents but also position Ryde as a cultural destination, distinct from the Sydney CBD. With its unique location, between the major cultural hubs of Sydney and Parramatta, stakeholders expressed the need for Ryde to establish a cultural identity that highlights its local potential and stands out in the broader cultural landscape of Greater Sydney.

GLOSSARY

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBD	Central Business District
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
GRP	Gross Regional Product
LGA	Local Government Area
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
NSW	New South Wales
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

City of Ryde

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