



CASTLEMAINE ART MUSEUM (CAM)

Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Indigenous Acknowledgement

Castlemaine Art Museum acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as Traditional Owners of the country on which CAM stands, we recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who contribute to the region. CAM is working with Traditional Owners and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in acknowledging Country throughout the organisation.



Cover image: Detail from the Exhibition
'Moondance: Ceramics and Paintings from the Collection.'

From the Chair of the Board

The Castlemaine Art Museum's (CAM) renewed strategic plan, commencing in 2025, builds on years of continuous reflection, dialogue, and learning. It responds to five transformative years for art museums and addresses post-COVID and inflationary challenges, ensuring CAM remains adaptive and culturally relevant. The plan expands on CAM's core values—excellence, inclusiveness, creativity, innovation, collaboration, sustainability, and relevance—which guide its programming, collections, and community engagement, connecting art to social and civic impact.

CAM acknowledges the profound changes brought by the pandemic, reconsidering the role of museums in society. Central priorities include meaningful engagement with First Nations and local communities, fostering equity and broadening participation to reflect diverse communities. Strategic pillars focus on sustainability, community engagement, collaboration with Traditional Owners, and a diversified funding strategy, including fundraising through Friends of CAM and development efforts by the Board and Trustees to support artistic programming, staffing, and the aging physical infrastructure. Adaptability is embedded in CAM's institutional culture, underpinning strategic goals, measurable outcomes, and accountability, while ensuring the museum remains a dynamic and responsive cultural institution.

Mark Sheppard

Who We Are

Castlemaine Art Museum is one of Australia's premier regional public art spaces, engaging audiences with artists from Victoria, across Australia, and around the world. Since 2023, CAM has been recognised for its unique fusion of art and social history, with a strong commitment to First Nations representation across its Board, staff, volunteers, and exhibiting artists.

CAM is located on Dja Dja Wurrung country, in the culturally vibrant community of Castlemaine, Central Victoria. Unique in the Australian cultural landscape, CAM was established by community subscription in 1913 and moved to purpose-built premises in 1931. CAM has been sustained through community support and held in its affection for over one hundred years.

CAM holds one of the most important permanent art collections in regional Victoria, emphasising traditional landscape painting and significant works from the 19th and 20th centuries, including Edwardian, inter-war, and post-war Australian artists. The collection also features modern and contemporary works, with a focus on Central Victorian artists. Its social history holdings include documents, photographs, costumes, decorative arts, and artifacts from the Mount Alexander Goldfields region. The museum building, designed by Percy Meldrum in the Art Deco and Egyptian revival style, is historically significant as an early example of the modern movement in provincial Victoria.

The museum's historical collection reflects over 120 years of engagement with the land of the Dja Dja Wurrung, exploring themes of Invasion, the Gold Rushes, Women, and Applied Decorative Arts. These themes unfold into narratives encompassing First Peoples, migration, natural history, industry, politics, suffrage, education, and cultural diversity. CAM functions not merely as an archive, but as a living collection of memory that encourages continual reflection and dialogue about our collective histories.

CAM is committed to acquiring works that broaden perspectives and spark cultural dialogue, reflecting diverse experiences and viewpoints. More than a collection, the museum is a social and cultural gathering place—welcoming, thought-provoking, and grounding—helping visitors understand who we are and who we aspire to be.

Mission

To stimulate, provoke and inspire through artistic experiences that nurture creative excellence, strengthen community, and inform public discourse, contributing to positive social change.

Vision

To imagine and inspire a world where art sparks courage and curiosity, where creativity flows freely through communities, and where every artistic voice has the power to shape conversations and kindle lasting social change.



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Image above: Peter Rushforth (1920-2015), jar, bowl, Moore Collection of Ceramics, CAM.
Phyl Dunn (1915-1999) Brown stoneware, circa 1969 CAM, Kohane and Moore Collection Ceramics.

Values

OUR VALUES ARE:

- Excellence – Setting the highest standards of best practice in our artistic programmes, audience engagement, partnerships and governance.
- Inclusiveness – Striving for diversity in programming, exhibitions, staffing, and governance in ways that deepen empathy and cross-cultural understanding, particularly with our First Nations community, taking measures to eliminate all barriers to accessibility in the arts.
- Relevance – Facilitating opportunities for dialogue and exchange that affect positive social change through artistic practices that are engaged, inspiring, and bold.
- Collaboration – Developing mutually beneficial relationships with leading local, national and international artists and arts organisations, exemplary community partners, as well as funders and financial supporters through meaningful experiences and dialogue.
- Sustainability – Embracing transparent organisational practices and relationships with stakeholders in order to build creative, organisational, and financial capacity.
- Creativity and Innovation – Fostering interdisciplinary and interactive practices that stimulate creativity and fuel innovation and new knowledge, transforming our relationship with audiences as well as our ways of working.

Strategic Priorities

This plan is built in support of CAM’s vision to advance the arts locally, regionally, nationally, and globally in impactful, and inclusive programming, cultivating and interpreting artistic practices that ignite engagement with important issues of our time.

Over the next five years the following interconnected strategies will help us achieve that vision.

1. STRENGTHEN ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

We recognise that a sustainable future for CAM must be rooted in organisational capacity and care, and that inclusion and community-building are core values in this work.

We will focus on strengthening our financial, governance, and human resources to meet our goals as well as our future challenges.

To achieve this we will:

- Ensure our activities are aligned to our resources
- Grow our community of supporters to diversify revenue generation, developing new sources of public and private support
- Continue to focus on policy and process development
- Grow human resources and accessible infrastructure
- Increase the diversity of our staff and board, and engage them fully in revenue generation to build resources for all of our programmes

Over the next five years we will regularly conduct programme reviews and assess strategic priorities, develop new avenues for financial growth and capital needs, update our governance policies, develop a five year fundraising plan, increase the number of supporters and overall donations and champion a culture of philanthropy at all levels.



2. INCREASE SOCIAL IMPACT

We believe that art can support wellbeing, create shared understanding, promote belonging and pride, and support dialogue and learning.

We will focus on impact to ensure that CAM’s work has real life in various communities and is a catalyst for social change.

To achieve this we will:

- Embed the principles of social impact into everything we do
- Prioritise exhibitions and programmes that bring together a range of perspectives
- Amplify the impact of our educational programmes
- Ensure the gallery is an open, safe and welcoming space
- Share the value and transformative potential of the arts to diverse communities

Over the next five years, we will engage in active listening to address the needs of our communities, regularly and transparently report on our activities, measure the qualitative and quantitative impact of our work, co-create value, meaning and purpose with our partners and publics, champion the work of socially-engaged artists as well as a focus on land and sustainability as priority content, and undertake a marketing campaign that articulates the gallery’s value.

This builds on our emphasis on embedding social impact principles, ensuring our work resonates meaningfully within the communities we serve, as well as our work establishing CAM as a site for important conversations, creating an impact that extends beyond our walls and the broader public sphere.

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Image top right: Unknown First Nations maker, Native dilly-type bag made of pandanus leaves dyed with ochre.
Donated 1975, Castlemaine Art Museum

3. ADVANCE ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

We know that the arts enrich the quality of public life. At CAM, art and artists are at the heart of everything that we do.

We aim to be leaders in supporting artistic development, through innovative and diverse programming that explores the visual arts and their impact on audiences and our communities.

- To achieve this we will:
- Undertake programming that advances artistic practice
- Prioritise collecting and presenting of work by First Nations artists
- Showcase a diversity of artists, including those from communities who are systemically overlooked, at various stages of their careers
- Advance ideas that fuel creative innovation and engage wider audiences

Over the next five years, we will advance projects that encourage critical thinking and dialogue, review our acquisition policy and create a complementary five year collection plan, commission new work that reflects the diversity of our communities, leverage our resources and expand our network through partnerships with other art organisations, be a platform for the work of emerging, mid-career and established artists, and develop processes for our work that centres on care and reciprocity.

This builds upon our history of working with diverse artists and curators from emerging to established, that has ensured in the past a rich and dynamic programme.



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Russell Drysdale (1912-1981), *Desolation*, 1946, purchased 1946.
Leonard French (1928-2017), *Study for the Wall I*, circa 1976,
E.S. Hall Bequest Fund, 1977.



4. DEEPEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We celebrate our position as an anchor institution in Castlemaine and as such strive to be an influential contributor to civic life.

We serve the public good by prioritising inclusivity in our work and reducing barriers to access through co-creation of safe spaces, belonging and respect.

To achieve this we will:

- Support audiences in finding relevance through art
- Invest in reciprocal, ongoing relationships with diverse groups
- Co-create projects with communities we seek to engage
- Promote dialogue and exchange through our work

Over the next five years, we will reimagine the use of CAM's public spaces, engage the public in ongoing dialogue about the role the gallery plays in civic life, better understand more about who uses the gallery's spaces and how to make those spaces more widely accessible, deliver responsive programming that integrates community perspectives and feedback, continue to develop programming founded on principles of reconciliation and diversity, and conduct programme reviews annually to ensure accountability and relevance. This builds on our emphasis on inclusivity and active engagement with a diversity of communities that has established us as a significant contributor to the cultural and civic life of Castlemaine through focus on relevance and responsiveness. Our commitment to cultivating public good has built both trust and value, fostering a more inclusive, engaged, and dynamic community through the arts.

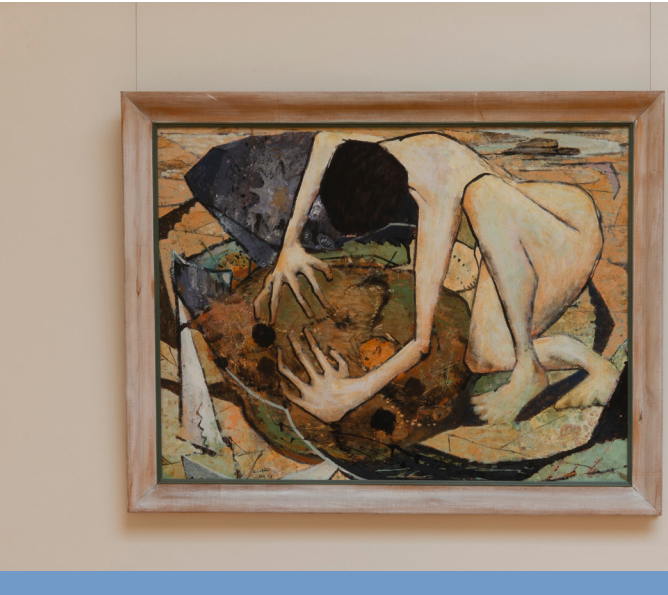
5. TRANSFORM THROUGH INNOVATION

We embrace innovation to support new ways of creating, collaborating and learning.

We will continue to apply the use of technology at CAM for artistic and organisational purposes as a means of engagement, conversation, dissemination and participation.

To achieve this we will:

- Invest in technology and learning to support our goals
- Collaborate with artists who work in digital technologies
- Leverage CAM's existing collections, spaces, and digital assets to reach new audiences, deepen engagement with existing visitors, and grow the museum's reach.
- Support creativity and sustainability by investigating new solutions



Over the next five years, we will pursue fundraising and partnership opportunities to invest in new technologies, explore the complex and generative roles visual culture plays in a world and online, test new ways of working with digital tools and technologies across our activities, create new avenues for access and engagement for our communities in exhibitions, programmes and collections, establish partnerships that support our learning and use of technology at the gallery, and focus on youth engagement to build audiences for the future.

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Image Top Left: Clara Tucker, *Viridian Daydream*, 2024, finalists.
A biennial acquisitive painting prize, Len Fox Painting Award
Commemorating the life and work of E. Phillips Fox.

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Image Top Right: Clifton Pugh (1924-1990)
The Crab Catcher, 1958, purchased, 1958.

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Image Left: Uncle Rick Nelson, *Dja Dja Wurrung elder, Welcome to Country*.
Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable
Margaret Gardner, AC, and Mayor Rosie Annear, Mount Alexander
Shire Council.

KEY PRIORITY 1

Strengthen Organisational Capacity

GOAL	INITIATIVE
1.1 Ensure our activities are aligned to our resources	1.1.1 Review the current business model to grow grant funding and increase operational income. 1.1.2 Build business cases for new initiatives that are aligned with our vision and values and that are costed appropriately. 1.1.3 Regularly review the organisational structure to ensure that it can support the initiatives in this strategic plan.
1.2 Grow our community of supporters to diversify revenue generation, developing new sources of public and private support	1.2.1 Build new partnerships with trusts and individual donors as well as businesses to develop future sponsorships. 1.2.2 Develop programs and activities that complement major Central Victorian events such as the Castlemaine State Festival, Jazz Festival etc.
1.3 Continue to focus on, policy and process development	1.3.1 Establish a Policy Review Calendar to identify which policies need urgent updates (e.g., child safety, cultural safety, digital collections). 1.3.2 Conduct a comprehensive audit of existing governance structures, board responsibilities, and decision-making processes to identify gaps or inefficiencies that could hinder creative initiatives or audience engagement. 1.3.3 Develop a governance framework that encourages innovation while maintaining accountability.
1.4 Grow human resources and accessible infrastructure	1.4.1 Establish structured volunteer recruitment, training, and retention plan, with clear role descriptions and recognition programs. 1.4.2 Partner with universities, TAFEs, and training providers to create internship programs in arts management, curation, or community engagement. 1.4.3 Enhance accessibility of physical building and website.
1.5 Increase the diversity of our staff and board, and engage them fully in revenue generation to build resources for all of our programmes	1.5.1 Advertise roles through diverse networks such as ArtsHub, Blak Jobs, disability employment services, multicultural associations, and local community groups. Use bias-free recruitment processes. 1.5.2 Establish measurable goals for First Nations, CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse), LGBTQIA+, neurodivergent, and disability representation. 1.5.3 Provide regular First Nations cultural safety and inclusion training for staff, board, and volunteers. 1.5.4 Equity Action Plan - Develop and monitor a plan that sets measurable goals for workplace equity, accessibility, and diverse participation in decision-making.

KEY PRIORITY 2

Increase Social Impact

GOAL	INITIATIVE
2.1 Embed the principles of social impact into everything we do	2.1.1 Co-create a clear social impact statement with staff, board, and community stakeholders to define what impact means for CAM (e.g., cultural empowerment, education, wellbeing, economic development). 2.1.2 Provide training to staff and board in impact measurement, inclusive design, and community engagement to embed these practices at every level.
2.2 Prioritise exhibitions and programmes that bring together a range of perspectives	2.2.1 Integrate Social Impact into programming through co-designing exhibitions and programs with First Nations communities, youth, and underrepresented groups to shape exhibitions and events. 2.2.2 Curate programs that explore current social issues such as climate change, cultural identity, or social justice, making the museum a space for dialogue.
2.3 Amplify the impact of our educational programmes	2.3.1 Develop and implement accessible creative programs that will expand CAM's outreach to schools, disability organisations, and community groups for workshops and tours. 2.3.2 Ensure continuous improvement through conducting regular reviews of programs and operations using qualitative and quantitative methods to understand what's working.
2.4 Ensure the gallery is an open, safe and welcoming space	2.4.1 Conduct a full audit of physical spaces, signage, and digital platforms for accessibility. 2.4.2 Develop and display a clear Code of Respect and Conduct at entrances and on the website. 2.4.3 Provide staff and volunteer training on de-escalation, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed engagement. 2.4.4 Review and report progress quarterly to ensure ongoing accountability.
2.5 Share the value and transformative potential of the arts to diverse communities	2.5.1 Offer workshops in visual arts, creative writing, and digital media led by local artists from diverse backgrounds. 2.5.2 Take artwork or museum-inspired activities into community hubs such as libraries, schools, cultural centres, and public spaces, reaching audiences who may not traditionally visit the museum. 2.5.3 Ensure programs are accessible to people with disabilities, culturally diverse communities, and non-English speakers through multilingual materials, sensory-friendly sessions, and adaptive art activities.

Exhibition: Sir Leslie Thornton
Castlemaine Art Museum's First Blockbuster
Image CAM.



KEY PRIORITY 3

Advance Artistic Development — create initiatives that will meet this goal for Castlemaine Art Museum

GOAL	INITIATIVE
3.1 Undertake programming that advances artistic practice and prioritise collecting and presenting of work by First Nations artist	3.1.1 First Nations focused Artist-in-Residence Program that offers studio space, mentorship opportunities, and the chance to develop experimental or interdisciplinary projects. 3.1.2 Commission site-specific projects where First Nations artists co-create with local communities, schools, or other creatives. 3.1.3 Build strong relationships with First Nations art centres, cultural organisations, and educational institutions to support artistic exchange, training, and joint exhibitions.
3.2 Showcase a diversity of artists, including those from communities who are systemically overlooked, at various stages of their careers	3.2.1 A dedicated annual exhibition series for early-career artists from underrep resented communities. 3.2.2 Offer an Intersectional Residency Program specifically targeting artists from marginalised backgrounds (e.g., Indigenous artists, LGBTQIA+ artists, artists with disability, CALD communities). 3.2.3 Review acquisition policies to actively collect works by underrepresented artists and establish a fund specifically for acquiring art from marginalised communities.
3.3 Advance ideas that fuel creative innovation and engage wider audiences	3.3.1 Encourage innovation through experimentation and position CAM as a site for artistic risk-taking and cross-disciplinary creation through the support of experimental exhibitions and residencies that facilitate collaborations across art, science, technology, and community knowledge. 3.3.2 Celebrate and reinterpret Castlemaine's unique cultural and environmental landscape by commissioning site-specific works in natural and heritage locations, aligning with local festivals and seasonal events and exploring contemporary responses to the region's industrial, goldfields, and migrant heritage.

KEY PRIORITY 4

Deepen Community Development

GOAL	INITIATIVE
4.1. Support audiences in finding relevance through art	4.1.1 Integrate local stories and perspectives into exhibitions and interpretation, ensuring audiences see themselves reflected in the museum. 4.1.2 Connect art to contemporary issues (social, environmental, cultural) through talks, events, and partnerships. 4.1.3 Offer participatory workshops where audiences respond to art through writing, making, or performance, with outcomes occasionally showcased.
4.2. Invest in reciprocal, ongoing relationships with diverse groups	4.2.1 Establish an advisory group representing diverse voices to guide programming, acquisitions, and engagement. 4.2.2 Develop multi-year projects and residencies that prioritise depth, continuity, and mutual benefit over one-off events to create sustained engagement pathways
4.3. Co-create projects with communities we seek to engage	4.3.1 Co-design projects with First Nations, migrant, disability, LGBTQIA+, and youth groups to build long-term collaborations

KEY PRIORITY 5

Transform through Innovation

GOAL	INITIATIVE
5.1 Invest in technology and learning to support our goals	5.1.1 Expand access to the collection through digitally cataloguing artworks and archival material with high-quality images and metadata. 5.1.2 Develop an interactive online platform for exhibitions to reach wider audiences. 5.1.3 Upgrade or implement a Cloud-Based Collections Management system for staff to efficiently manage acquisitions, loans, and conservation records.
5.2 Collaborate with artists who work in digital technologies	5.2.1 Invite digital artists (VR, AR, AI-generated art, interactive installations) for short-term residencies which would include mentorship sessions with local artists or community workshops and showcasing the resulting work in-gallery or online. 5.2.2 Partner with digital artists to create works specifically for online or virtual display or augmented reality (AR) experiences. This will allow remote audiences to interact with digital art via web or app platforms and potentially reach broader or international audiences.
5.3 Leverage CAM's existing collections, spaces, and digital assets to reach new audiences, deepen engagement with existing visitors, and grow the museum's reach.	5.3.1 Using digital storytelling create short videos, virtual tours, and interactive online content highlighting key artworks, exhibitions, and behind-the-scenes stories. 5.3.2 Develop thematic engagement initiatives such as participating in Slow Art Day, Analogue Art, workshops, or thematic events that tie the collection to contemporary topics or community interests. 5.3.3 Use visitor data and engagement metrics to tailor communications and programs to different audience segments, encouraging repeat visits and wider participation.



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*Detail: Clarice Beckett (1887-1935) Still Life (Marigolds) Circa 1929
Maude Rowe Bequest, 1937.*