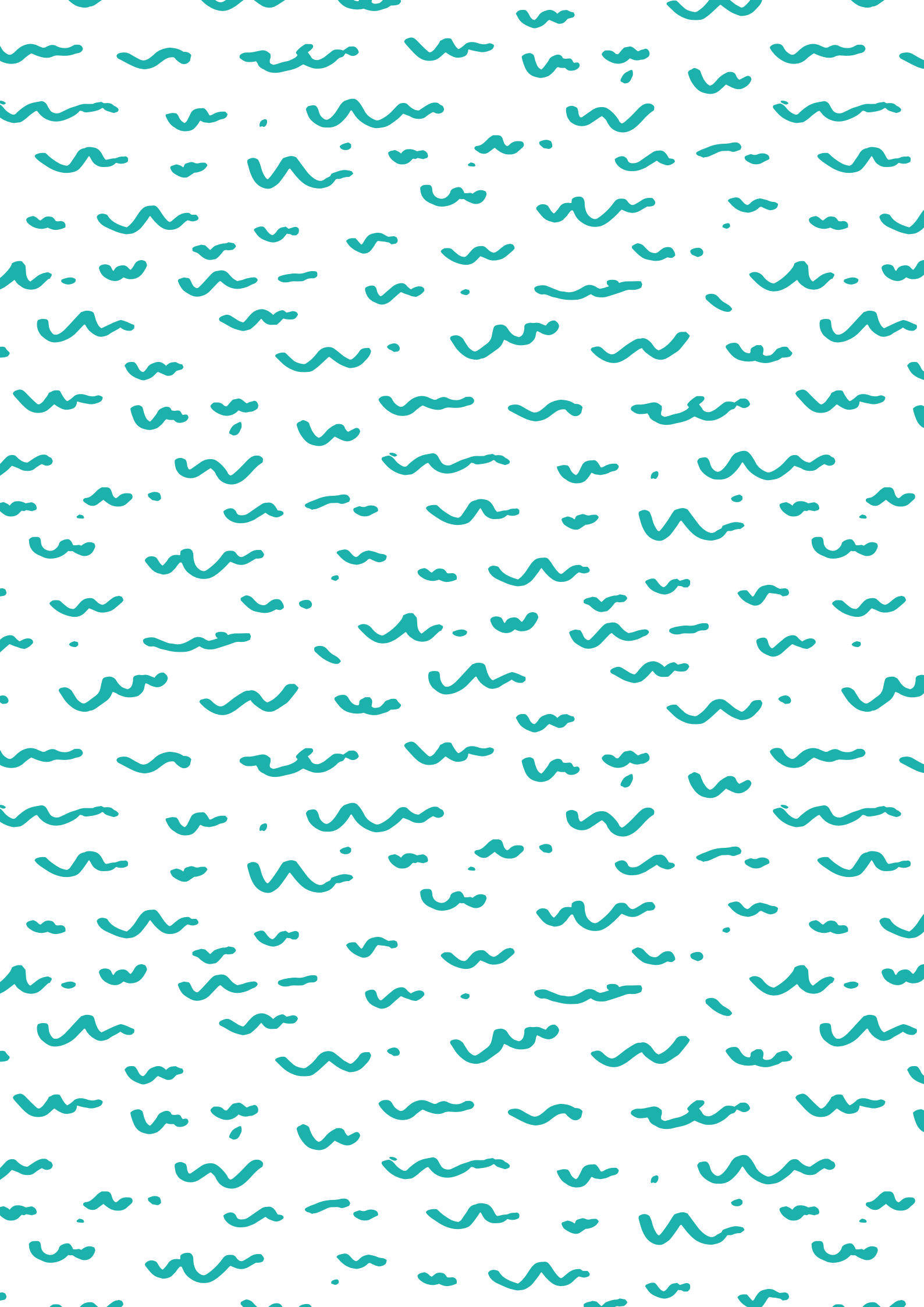


**Advocating
and Lobbying:**
Your Local Government Authority

**COUNTRY
ARTS
WA**



The *Art* of Lobbying

While we know arts experiences add to social and community life, how do you effectively influence your Local Government Authority (LGA) to ensure you are able to foster creativity, growth and resilience in your regional community?

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of speaking on behalf of or in support of another person, cause, policy or thing.

What is Lobbying?

Lobbying is the practice of advocacy through relationship-building, making extensive use of evidence-based material and research, with the intention of influencing a target stakeholder.

Lobbying is all about communication. The major consideration of any strategy is that your issues, concerns and suggestions are heard by those who have the responsibility and the authority to address them and make a difference.

Your committee, staff and members know what your organisation does, achieves and represents, but the challenge is to clearly communicate your message with a united front to identified stakeholders. This is essential to underpin any advocacy and lobbying activity.

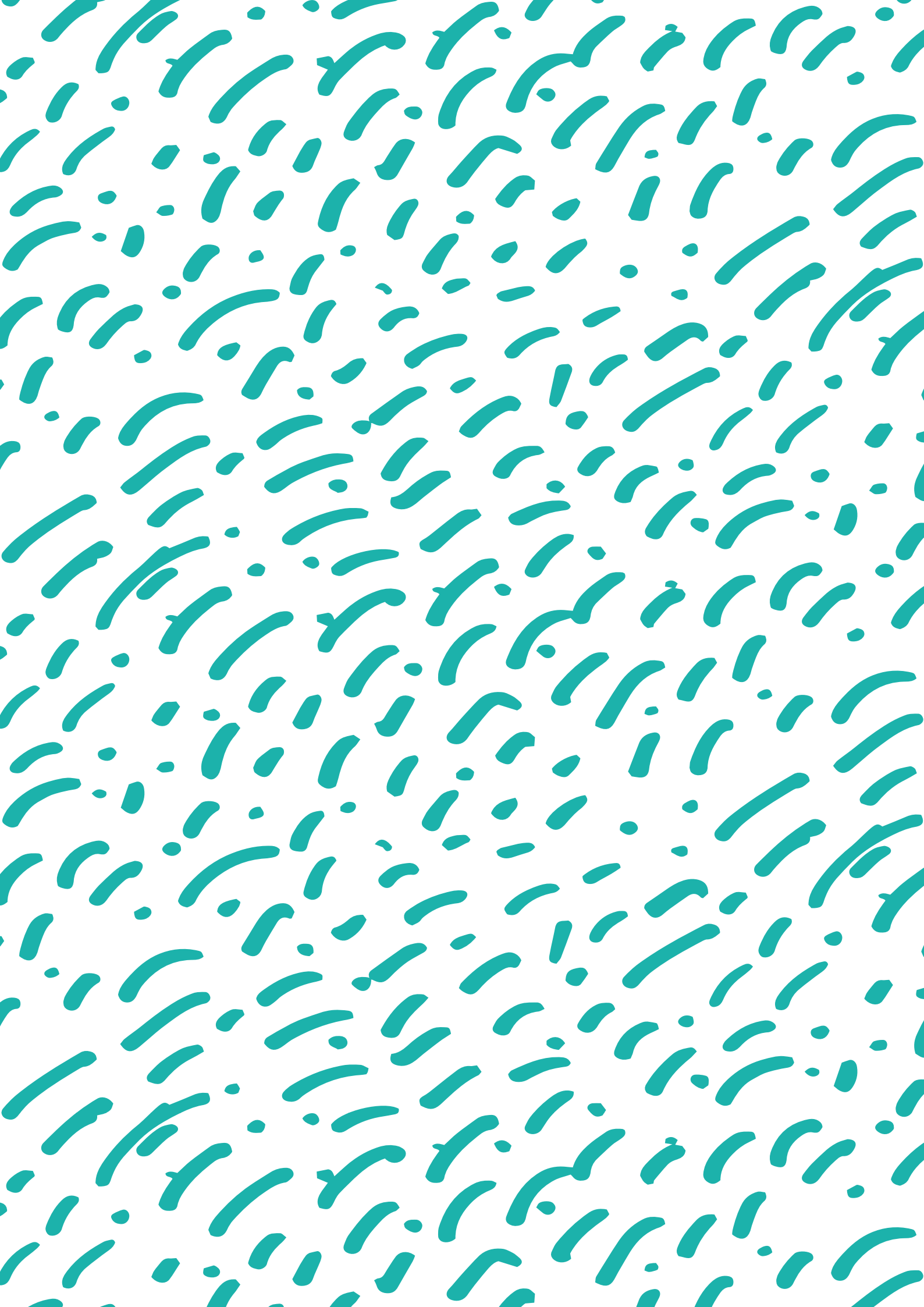
Self-promotion is key to highlighting and selling your organisation, showing your role in delivering arts and cultural programs and services to your community. You need to have a:

- defined purpose
- defined message
- defined timeline
- defined target

Clearly articulate what it is you want, and set-out the objectives you need in order to support your organisation in the short-and-longer-term. Do not be tempted to overburden yourselves or identify goals that may not be achievable within timeframes and/or capacity.

Remember, local government planning is driven by the community – **you**;
Communities are built and shaped by the people who live in them – **you**;
Your voice is valid; your wishes are valid.

Part of the remit of your LGA is community development.



Your Lobbying Plan

You can create awareness and garner support for arts and culture within your LGA and community by creating a strong case which demonstrates the artistic, cultural, social and economic impact of arts and culture within your community.

Be realistic in what you are asking

As a peak regional arts and cultural organisation you should develop a lobbying and advocacy strategy as a matter of good governance.

When planning your LGA lobbying, the following are important:

- the goal needs to be important and relevant; what is it you want/need, and why you want/need it
- does the goal feed back to your Business Plan
- does the goal tie into the LGA's Community Development Plan
- focussed networking and development of personal relationships; and give careful consideration as to who will undertake this
- being proactive; consistent in your communication; and honest
- quality material with easily digestible facts
- positive use of social media – it has the potential to be very powerful if used well
- being aware of your audience
- being positive and constructive; do not attack or rehash the past. Previous tensions may need to be resolved but it will be more beneficial to focus on how you see your relationship in the future

You will also need to consider your mode of delivery to give authority and strength to your lobbying. These may include:

- annual presentation to council
- one-on-one meetings
- group meetings
- written correspondence
- electronic correspondence
- telephone communication

If you are starting at ground zero you may not be immediately successful with your ask. Consider compromise.

LGA support can be a cash component and/or in-kind. So take this into consideration when drafting your objectives.

If your LGA has no cultural community development officer then your organisation is directly saving them money.

To provide further evidence of the professionalism of your organisation and the extent of your impact on the community, it would be beneficial to provide the following information on an annual basis:

- your organisational structure and governance
- Annual Report and latest financials
- summary of annual program
- how your program caters to the varying sectors within your community
- funding sourced from other parties
- local and regional partnerships
- membership figures



Shaping Your Presentation

Introduction to Presentation

The following is an example of how you may consider starting your presentation:

Currently the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY] contributes [\$ xxxx] annually to [xxxxxxxxxx]. This amounts to [xx%] of the revenue of the Shire. Therefore, [YOUR ORGANISATION] would welcome the opportunity to explore greater support for the arts from the Shire; particularly noting [YOUR ORGANISATION] contributes a great deal to the liveability, identity and enhancement of the [xxxxxxxxxx] community, in a way that far exceeds the Shire's investment.

NB: Access the total Shire revenue from their latest Annual Report.

When presenting to your LGA the prime focus will of course be local, then regional. You may also touch upon state, and national contexts, to provide an overarching view.

In your presentation do not trot out catch-phrases, mother statements or jargon, as this tends to distract rather than enforce your position. Say it how you are comfortable saying it; be professional but still heartfelt. Do not be hesitant, apologetic or timid; make eye contact and confidently state what it is you are requesting.

Ensure the presentation is clearly documented, as it could be someone else presenting/lobbying the following year.

Undertake Research

- refer to the LGA's Arts and Cultural Policy and respond with examples from your annual program
- have a representative attend the public portion of monthly council meetings
- establish who the arts champions are within the council, and start courting them; this will need to be confirmed annually
- give a presentation on your organisation at a council meeting where you do not 'ask' for anything, as the reception you receive or the questions asked may re-shape your thinking when you present at a later date with your 'ask'

Collect Data

Good standard practice is to gather qualitative and quantitative information which goes towards supporting your arguments regarding the impact of arts and culture:

- record numbers at all your events; provide figures for at least the past three years along with projected figures for at least the next year
- write a pre-event brief on the event to explain why it was programmed
- write a post-event report to see if suppositions were correct, and describe outcome/s of event
- if you have the available resources, map arts and culture offerings in whole-of-community, and show the links and partnerships between them and your organisation to demonstrate the scope of your engagement within your community across the health, education, tourism etc. sectors



Share Your Successes

Your success stories illustrate the power and need of arts and culture in your community. Tell them how wonderful you are. You will need to convince those councillors who do not understand or believe in what your organisation achieves:

- so tell them your wonderful success stories
- select two at most - do not swamp them
- make it short and sweet
- be very clear as to why it was considered a success
- successes can be identified from a number of sources including:
 - ticket sales
 - attendance/participation numbers
 - targeting a particular community group
 - community awareness
 - quality of work
 - quality of delivery
 - stakeholder satisfaction
 - customer satisfaction
 - addressing an organisational objective

Keeping on the Case

Take every opportunity to keep your organisation within the sightlines of your LGA, and keep persisting. You may have been unsuccessful in receiving funding or have received less than the amount requested, but keep trying each year.

- send a personal invite to CEO, Shire President and councillors to your events
- ensure they receive your newsletters
- invite the editor and photographer of the local paper to all your events
- negotiate with your local paper to have a weekly column/ad
- maintain a clippings file
- present to council once a year
- establish a standing meeting with the CEO and Community Development Manager every quarter
- ensure your website and Facebook is current, and shows the scope and reach of your community engagement

Remember, LGAs are responsible for and accountable to their communities.

Reference: lgaq.asn.au/community-arts-and-culture-the-case

Key Messages

- Regional arts have been proven to transform places, enhance livability and to strengthen communities, and are essential in WA's current regional and economic climate.
- Regional arts are a strong economic performer with the sector leveraging an average 3:1 return on investment.
- Individuals, community groups and organisations need to mobilise now to make a positive difference in Western Australia.

Facts & Figures to support your presentation

Children involved in arts programs scored better in **problem solving, planning, communication** and **working with others**, than students who were not involved in arts programs. It appears that a narrowly conceived curriculum, in which the arts are either not offered or are offered in limited and sporadic amounts, exerts a negative effect on the development of critical cognitive competencies and personal dispositions.

► www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Visual_Arts_Review/Present_State_An_Inquiry_Into_The_Visual_Arts_Sector_in_Western_Australia_2016.pdf#page=16

10 things children / you can learn from the arts

1. Creativity
2. Confidence
3. Problem Solving
4. Perseverance
5. Focus
6. Non-verbal Communication
7. Receiving Constructive Criticism
8. Collaboration
9. Dedication
10. Accountability

► www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2013/01/22/top-10-skills-children-learn-from-the-arts/

■ 91%

Regional Western Australians participate in arts and culture (94% metro)

■ 89%

Western Australian believe arts and culture are valuable to the community as a whole

■ 54%

Australians think the arts are helping us to deal with stress, anxiety and depression

■ 78%

Regional Western Australians who donate time and money are significantly more likely to do volunteer works in the arts (63% WA)

■ 66%

Australians believe the arts have a big impact on child development

■ 56%

Western Australian residents agree the arts contribute to our ability to express ourselves

■ 52%

Regional residents, as a whole, believe the arts have a big impact on community pride and identity (43% WA)

■ 59%

Western Australians agree the arts positively impact our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas

■ 50%

Western Australians believe the arts have a big impact on our sense of wellbeing and happiness

► www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Arts%20Daily%20Life%202013/Arts_Daily_Life_DCA_Fact_Sheet.pdf

Arts & Culture;



► www.countryartswa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CAWA_Manifesto2020_FINAL_lowresUPDATED.pdf

A community with a thriving arts and cultural life is a *liveable* community. It makes people want to stay there, instils community pride and supports social cohesion—transforming and shaping identity and building strong, resilient, prosperous and healthy communities.

Arts and health provide safe environments for individuals and communities to overcome health concerns, including mental health issues and social disadvantage. This lesson has been embraced by the award-winning community organisation, Renew Australia, which is helping to facilitate cultural activities to bring new life to depressed regions and towns. In fact, the transformative potential of this project was reflected when Newcastle was listed in the Lonely Planet's top 10 cities of the world to visit specifically because of the impact that the Renew Australia model of cultural engagement had on invigorating the city centre

People chose to engage in the arts for social and entertainment opportunities, to support the organisers of arts events, and for individual wellbeing. It further supports the notion that the **arts can be used for economic stimulation**, to **address social concerns**, and to **strengthening or communicating identity** and a **sense of place**. Anecdotal evidence suggests that regional audiences travel greater distances to attend events and, therefore, are committed patrons of the arts when presented with the opportunity to engage in them.

Australians in regional areas participate just as much, but in different types of arts events to those in metropolitan areas.

Creative participation in the arts has increased significantly amongst regional Australians, from 39% in 2009 to 49% in 2013. This is now at a similar level to Australians living in metropolitan areas (47%). In particular, creative participation has risen for Visual Art and Craft (32%, from 21% in 2009) and Music (20%, from 14% in 2009).

Although receptive participation in regional areas remains largely unchanged at 93%, from 92% in 2009, there has been a significant decrease in receptive participation of Visual Arts & Craft (33%, from 38% in 2009) and Theatre & Dance (32%, from 39% in 2009).

Regional Australians are more likely to attend Indigenous arts and craft, dance and music events. This is reflected in regional attitudes towards Indigenous arts with a quarter of people having a strong interest compared to 20% in metropolitan areas.

► artfacts.austaliacouncil.gov.au/overview/participation-14/ov-fact61/

Creative participation in regional areas

2009 2013

All arts	39%	↑ 49%
Visual art & craft	21%	↑ 32%
Music	14%	↑ 20%

Receptive participation in regional areas

2009 2013

All arts	92%	↑ 93%
Visual art & craft	38%	↓ 33%
Theatre & dance	39%	↓ 32%

1 in 3
Australians live in
regional or remote places

Regional arts and cultural contributions have a national impact. Culture comes from place; it is an important part of creating communities. Regional arts link people to broader community life through economic opportunities, improved quality of life and social connection.

Regional arts bring people together

\$155 million

Spent on arts & culture by Western Australian local governments

The highest ranking responses on the contribution of arts and culture to community life were firmly in the realm of intrinsic value- **vibrant community; social cohesion** and **community capacity building**; and **cultural identity** and **expression**.

79
percent

Local Government sector active in arts and culture (98% urban, 71% regional)

90
percent

Local governments believe arts & culture play a significant role in community wellbeing

79
percent

Local governments actively support arts and cultural groups

► walgga.asn.au/getattachment/Policy-Advice-and-Advocacy/Community-Development/Arts-and-Culture/Arts-and-Culture-and-WA-Local-Government-Report-2015.pdf

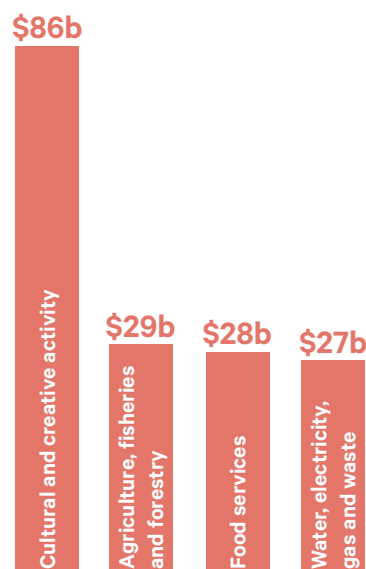
\$86 billion

estimated gross value added to Australia's economy from cultural and creative activity

That's more than agriculture, fisheries and forestry (\$29 billion), more than food services (\$28 billion), and more than water, electricity, gas and waste (\$27 billion).

Local shires and councils support arts to the tune of \$1 billion dollars a year! Australia's 565 local governments make the largest investment in arts and cultural activities of any level of government.

Art is a key element of many local economies. It influences employment, volunteering, tourism, partnerships and investment.



► regionalarts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RAA%E2%80%9494Thats-a-fact1.pdf

The value of **community-based arts**

Engagement with the arts can address social inequality and disadvantage, and create community vitality and shared identity. The arts can contribute to other areas of society including education, health, the justice system, community building and reconciliation. A community where people participate in cultural activity has greater potential for connection, caring and social development

Making art in community contexts is a social activity: it involves sharing, collaborating and building relationships with others. There is mounting evidence that participating in the arts develops creative thinking that is transferable across all knowledge areas. It teaches us to link diverse ideas and experiences. Creative thinking and the flexibility of mind and action are increasingly recognised as desirable attributes in the 21st century.

Further links

Department of Culture and the Arts Regional Arts and Culture Action Plan
► www.dca.wa.gov.au/DevelopingArtsandCulture/regional/regional-action-plans/

Department of Local Government and Communities Integrated Planning Framework guidelines
► www.dlglc.wa.gov.au/CommunityInitiatives/Pages/Integrated-Planning-and-Reporting.aspx?url.axd/0abd94b83503564ba1b939678f6596c6/

