

Eurobodalla Shire

Situation Analysis

Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Report



Susan Conroy & Mandy Hillson

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Acknowledgement

The consultants would like to acknowledge the support and generous assistance provided by Council staff.

We would also like to thank the Sunset Committee and in particular the community members. You were generous with your time and knowledge and your ongoing commitment and interest in fostering the arts and cultural life of the Shire is commendable.

The support, enthusiasm and positive outlook of those with whom we consulted demonstrated to us a generosity of spirit of the Eurobodalla community, and we thank you for that.

Executive Summary

The Cultural Character of the Shire

Residents of the Eurobodalla Shire actively participate in the arts however this is not widely recognised in the community as a whole or by the many visitors who flock to the Shire during the holiday periods. What people create, how they do it, where they create is generally unseen or not known about.

There are estimated to be around 5,600 residents who participate in the arts (about 21% of the Shire's adult population) through local community organisations. Most of these groups offer small, micro-scale, intimate activity with the traditional crafts and arts such as woodworking, textile work and all forms of music being the most popular activities. People come together to practice their art or craft, develop their skills, share knowledge and to be actively involved in their community, mostly as hobbyists.

With over 65 community organisations offering arts and cultural activities, the level of volunteerism is high. These groups generally operate in a casual and informal manner.

It is difficult to achieve a critical mass to support large-scale audiences as much of the activity is dispersed throughout the Shire and generally people are reluctant to travel across the Shire except for a major event like a festival. But it is also the small scale, intimate nature of the activity that gives the arts in the Shire its distinguishing character and personality.

The three major towns in the Shire have developed distinctly different cultural landscapes. Batemans Bay has a lively performing arts community with an active contemporary music scene around the clubs and cafes, classical music concerts, and the very active Batemans Bay Theatre Players. The U3A offers its large membership base many opportunities to participate in the arts as do other large organisations like the Batemans Bay Arts and Crafts Society.

Moruya area has a number of small bands and music groups and an active visual arts community with the Mechanics Institute, the RSL hall and Arts Central all providing focal points.

Narooma area also has an active club and pub music scene, a popular small cinema and an active visual arts and craft group focused around the Narooma School of Arts site in central Narooma. Bodalla, Central Tilba and Mogo are home to many micro cultural businesses while a host of other arts and craft activity occurs in the other small centres throughout the Shire.

Key Issues

Facilities (Hard Infrastructure)

The Situation Analysis has reinforced the findings of the *Cultural Plan 2006 – 2010* which found that the most significant issue for arts and cultural development was the lack of appropriate arts and cultural facilities in terms of size, access, affordability and characteristics such as lighting, acoustics, lack of storage, and lack of suitable seating specific to their intended use. The key issues identified included the lack of:

- centrally located, affordable, purpose built facilities which are designed for both performing and visual arts. (Council-owned facilities are generally not centrally located within the townships/villages, are designed for sports or multi-purpose use and given the history of their development, are in varying condition)
- clarity about ownership and management of community infrastructure.

Resources (Soft Infrastructure)

The key issues in relation to the other aspects that influence the use of facilities are the:

- need for readily accessible information on the facilities available for arts and cultural use and what they offer
- need for greater access to skills development
- lost opportunities to attract visiting artists and touring product
- limited external funding for the arts coming into the Shire.

Looking to the Future

In response to the issues raised and the general need identified, this study proposes with the assistance of external funding, that there be an increased investment in supporting and developing the cultural life of the Shire. The recommendations are based on key principles.

- Investment be efficient and effective by:
 - utilising existing infrastructure where it is economical to do so
 - ensuring the scale and location of infrastructure reflects the settlement pattern and council's financial situation
 - maximising utilisation of the infrastructure.
- Investment to be spread across the Shire to be responsive to the different characteristics, and to provide accessibility and equity to the Shire's various communities.
- Key strengths in the community to be built on include:
 - relaxed and informal lifestyle
 - high levels of involvement in cultural pursuits
 - myriad of opportunities to participate in cultural activity
 - strong community bonds within the smaller towns and villages
 - strong self-reliance, longevity, and independence of the community organisations and high levels of volunteerism
 - small intimate scale of most of the activity
 - gems such as the live streaming of opera and theatre into the cinemas, the music festivals, the quality of visiting artists, the quality of our professional artists, including aboriginal artists
 - rich cultural (Aboriginal and European) heritage.

Therefore, the key areas recommended for investment are:

Facilities (hard infrastructure)

- making specified existing facilities more useable
- building new facilities with adequate car parking where there is a need
- streamlining and clarifying management arrangements

Resources (soft infrastructure)

- actively facilitating use of the facilities
- building the skills of people and their organisations (professional development and networking)
- providing comprehensive information – easily accessible facilities and more opportunities available
- seeking further State and Federal Governments and philanthropic funding.

Facility Hierarchy

Council has indicated its commitment to improve arts and cultural infrastructure stating that it aims to provide sustainable and accessible regional, local and neighbourhood recreational and community facilities across the Shire in accordance with adopted plans.¹

This report recommends that a hierarchy of arts and cultural facilities be established over the next 5 to 10 years to cater for the gradual growth in population.

Arts Centres

These are for the co-location of arts and cultural activities to create a focal point of interest in a town centre. They comprise spaces for performance, exhibiting artworks, and workshop spaces for the making of craft and artwork.

Stand Alone Facilities

These facilities have a singular purpose or focus and are intended to provide spaces for artists and participants to share knowledge and to develop skills. They are in accessible but not necessarily high profile locations.

¹Eurobodalla Shire Council Management Plan, 2009-2014

Community Halls

The most accessible halls can be reinstated as the centrepiece in their villages and offer spaces for a variety of arts and cultural activities throughout the Shire. Figure 1 below provides a graphic of the proposed hierarchy.

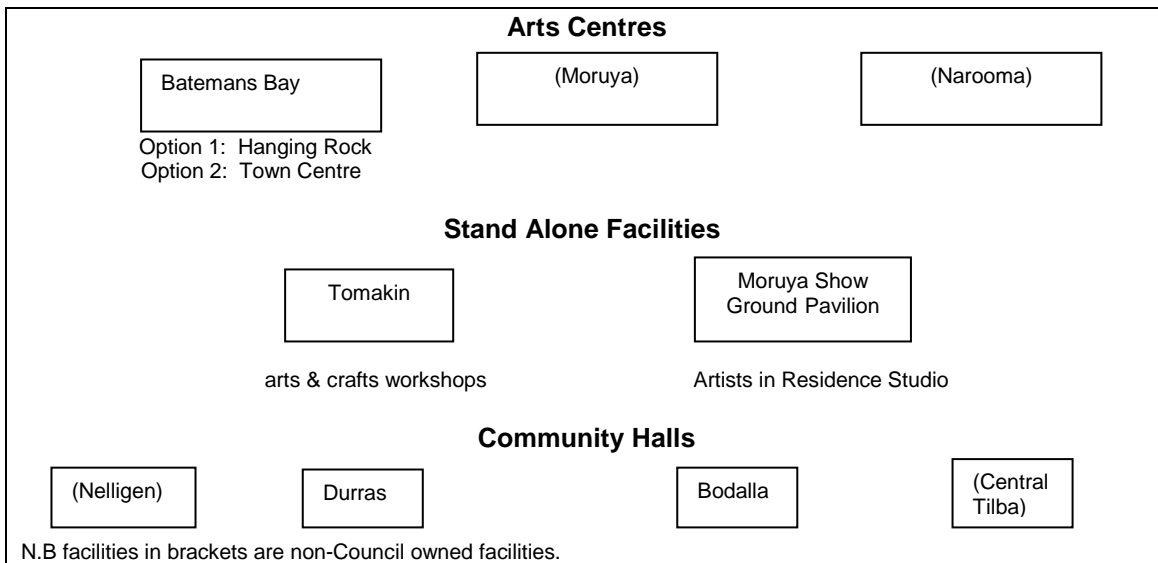


Figure 1: Proposed Facility Hierarchy

A large regional arts centre, regional performing arts centre and/or regional gallery has not been recommended because:

- even with the expected population of 44,794 by 2021, it will be difficult to achieve a critical mass of local hirers and/or audiences to support a large facility, particularly as the consultations indicated that residents are unlikely to travel across the Shire to attend arts events, performances and exhibitions (except for large festivals);
- the hiring costs are likely to be unaffordable for most local groups (most are small gatherings, voluntary and have low membership fees) and hence would only be affordable for external hirers;
- the subsidies required by Council to support the operational costs are likely to be very significant, as is experience by other Councils managing such centres;
- if Council was to invest in a major arts centre, then it is less likely that the other needs for workshop spaces, small performing spaces and small exhibition spaces throughout the Shire could be addressed.

Benefits

Investment in cultural infrastructure (hard and soft) will assist Council in delivering against its promises and demonstrate to the community that Council is genuine about its commitments in documents and policies. For example, in the *Community Strategic Plan 2008-13*, Council said it will:

- facilitate sustainable infrastructure and services that meet human needs for all stages of life
- encourage more active and healthy lifestyles
- improve the range of health and community services
- promote, enhance and celebrate the character, heritage and cultural of our towns and villages and the community

The Plan details what Council is already doing:

- investing more in infrastructure maintenance and renewal to ensure our assets are sustained for the future (Council is developing and will implement a comprehensive asset management system)
- implementing (and updating) the Cultural Plan
- extending cultural services to meet changing population needs
- providing grants and seed funding for community development projects.

Council said it will measure its success by:

- community satisfaction with infrastructure
- people continuing to show high satisfaction with Eurobodalla as a place to live
- people actively participating in volunteering activities
- council maintaining a safe and healthy community².

The commitment to make the recommended investment in arts and cultural infrastructure will assist Council in building and strengthening its relationship with its ratepayers. It will provide a platform for building bridges and confidence between Council, its ratepayers and the communities of the Eurobodalla Shire.

Quality visible infrastructure and hubs of activity, such as well-designed arts centres, can:

- make distinctive landmark statements to tourists and potential residents
- enliven streetscapes and
- create spin-off opportunities for new small businesses eg cafes, and retail outlets.

Summary of Recommendations

Below is a listing of the recommendations made in this report.

Benchmarking

1. **THAT** the Council undertake a regional study tour of arts and cultural facilities as part of its deliberations regarding arts and cultural infrastructure for the Shire.

Hard Infrastructure

2. **THAT** the Community Connections Services Stream has program management and venue hire responsibilities for community facilities to build a productive relationship with the facility users
3. **AND THAT** a clearly defined Service Level Agreement is established within Council for the facilities maintenance program
4. **THAT** a review of fees and charges for arts use of venues be undertaken to provide equity and simplicity in fee arrangements e.g. develop an hourly and a reduced daily/weekly fee, regardless of the type of arts use.
5. **THAT** a comprehensive register with basic information about each facility be established. The register would include location, size, fees and charges, facility resources (kitchen, cutlery/crockery, tables/chairs), climate control.
6. **THAT** a condition audit report on all public halls be commissioned as a matter of priority to determine a more accurate assessment of the maintenance required appropriate to their intended use.
7. **AND THAT** the condition reports include an assessment of the community facilities that are intended for arts use (both the building and the grounds).
8. **THAT** annual maintenance plans be developed for each facility.

Resources

9. **THAT** Council plays an active role in supporting and encouraging organisations to apply for external funding.
10. **THAT** the venues be promoted outside of the Shire to potential arts hirers by Council staff who are responsible for managing Council's arts centres and community facilities.
11. **THAT** Council actively pursue funding to support a range of new arts and cultural initiatives.

²Eurobodalla Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2008-13 p 6,8

12. **THAT** Council actively pursue funding to support touring arts product.
13. **THAT** Council negotiates with SEAR to agree on the products and projects that will be taking place within the Shire, at what venues and when. It is anticipated that this would be in line with Council's expressed vision and goals to be developed in the next cultural plan.
14. **THAT** Council make a provision under its own Public Liability Insurance to support Group Public Liability and Volunteer Accident insurance to support small scale arts and community groups that use Council facilities to provide small scale community events and activities for the Shire communities.
15. **THAT** Council establish a central point of access to information on:
 - arts groups
 - artists
 - venues available for hire (and what type of art form they are most suited to) for each art medium and location
16. **THAT** new, legible signage be developed to be located at the front of each facility clearly identifying it as a Community/Arts Centre or Arts Centre.
17. **THAT** the Coordinator Community Cultural Development position be fulltime (or two part-time positions) to extend the strategic planning, as well as community cultural development opportunities through community support for grant application and grant project management role.

Looking to the Future

18. **THAT** all gallery spaces owned and managed by Council (there will be two recommended) be professionally curated to provide quality exhibiting experiences for the artists and audience. This could be done by paid staff or professionally trained volunteers.
19. **THAT** Council consider Options 1 (Hanging Rock) or 2 (Town Centre – expanded Community Centre) for the establishment of a small arts hub in Batemans Bay for:
 - community gallery
 - performance space (for around 150 seats) for music and theatre
 - space suitable for dance workshops
 - art/craft studios suitable for dry and wet work
 - storage
20. **THAT** the Land of Many Waters Gallery be converted to a retail outlet selling artwork on commission utilising the services of a curator to select the works for sale.
21. **THAT** Council negotiate with NSW RSL to purchase of the Mechanics Institute and the RSL Hall (from Council's Capital Works Program - Infrastructure Fund) in order to create the Moruya Arts Centre.
22. **AND THAT** if purchased, Council invest in their proper maintenance, upgrade and expansion for:
 - community gallery in the Mechanics Institute
 - performance space suitable for theatre, music and film in the RSL Hall
 - space suitable for dance workshops
 - two art/craft studios
 - storage
23. **THAT** Council not spend any further maintenance funding or consider allocating any substantial money to properties that it does not own.
24. **AND THAT** the Community Connections Services Stream manage the arts centres.

25. **THAT** Council work in partnership with the Narooma School of Arts to develop a master plan to include draft sketch plans and cost estimate by an independent and qualified designer.
26. **THAT** Council assist the Narooma School of Arts with an application to ArtsNSW under its Capital Project Funding for up to \$100,000 (or \$250,000 if exceptional) to create the Narooma Arts Centre (this would be 50 per cent of the cost of the capital project) to include:
 - a modification of the cinema to accommodate music and theatre performance
 - workshop spaces for wet and dry art/craft
 - storage
 - modification of the cottage to accommodate a community gallery.
27. **THAT** the School of Arts request a further interest free loan from Council (the School has a good track record of repaying these loans and currently has a loan with Council for the construction of the disabled toilet) to achieve the other 50%.
28. **THAT** Council cease paying for the leasing arrangement on behalf of the Montague Arts and Crafts Society and convert the funding to a block capital grant.
29. **AND THAT** these options be discussed with the Narooma School of Arts.
30. **AND THAT** Council support the School of Arts in attracting philanthropic funding for the capital works.
31. **THAT** Council allocate Infrastructure Funding to the construction of the workshop space for wet crafts at the Tomakin Community Centre.
32. **THAT** in the longer term, as an alternative to Tomakin, when Broulee has substantially developed around Captain Oldrey Park, that consideration is given to the construction of wet and dry craft workshop spaces at the Captain Oldrey Hall.
33. **THAT** Council negotiate with the Moruya Showground Committee and support the establishment of an Artist Residency Program based on use of the Showground Pavilion and nearby cottage.
34. **AND THAT** Council through the Coordinator Community Cultural Development investigate and report to Council on the opportunities to form a partnership with Parramatta City Council to support the Artist in Residency Program including applying for grants to support this initiative.
35. **THAT** if Council is successful in its application to NSW Office of Rural Affairs Community Hall Renewal Fund for the upgrade of Bodalla and Durras Halls, that it works in partnership with the Bodalla and Durras communities on the delivery of these projects.
36. **THAT** Council encourage and work with the Nelligen and Central Tilba communities to apply for Community Hall Renewal funding to ensure that their community halls can continue to provide important community gathering and meeting spaces.

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1. The Brief

As one of the initial steps in reviewing the Cultural Plan (2006-210), the Eurobodalla Shire Council commissioned this study to investigate the Shire's current arts and cultural activities, the facilities used, the aspirations of the people and groups using them and future infrastructure requirements.

The Council has commissioned this study to better understand the nature of arts and cultural activity in the Shire and the infrastructure needed to further develop the arts and cultural life and will be used to inform the revision of the current Cultural Plan. The study was also initiated in response to three key infrastructure-related recommendations in the Plan as follows:

- investigate the feasibility of developing a public/private sector partnership for the provision of a community facility in Batemans Bay that meets the local needs of arts and cultural activities
- consider in the 2006/10 Management Plan the commissioning of a Feasibility Study for a Regional Cultural Centre that investigates and makes recommendations regarding the possible functions, preferred site, construction cost estimates, and management and partnership options; and
- investigate the feasibility of including provision for local arts and cultural needs in the redevelopment of the Narooma Recreation and Leisure Centre.

The following are the outcomes expected from this study which this report has addressed.

- A detailed profile of the current arts and cultural activity within the Shire including
 - activities that contribute to the development of skills
 - education opportunities
 - opportunities for participating in community cultural development activities
 - the capacity for cultural tourism
 - identification of where activities are clustered
- A detailed description of the arts and cultural infrastructure and the venues used for cultural purposes, within the Shire.
- An evaluation of this infrastructure
- An overview of the arts landscape
- An assessment of future requirements to support the development of the arts and cultural life of the Shire
- A description of benchmarking examples to support the recommendations
- A strategic direction for the development of suitable performing and visual arts facilities

The brief requested extensive community consultation with arts practitioners, groups and organisations from diverse backgrounds and arts practice.

2. Background

This project is an initiative of the Eurobodalla Cultural Infrastructure Feasibility Committee known as the 'Sunset Committee', whose role is to look at the feasibility of developing appropriate facilities for performing and visual arts in the Shire. The committee was established by Council to assist Council in developing a strategic direction in relation to the Shire's social and cultural infrastructure development. Members were appointed by Council and are:

- Chair - Cr. Rob Pollock
- PerfEx Committee representatives – Jean Brewer and Dave Harding
- South East Arts Region – Andrew Gray
- Community representatives – Don Mitchelmore and William Hawkey
- Arts industry representatives – Maisy Stapleton (CEO Museums & Galleries NSW) and Deborah Ely (CEO Bundanoon Trust)
- ESC Director Community Wellbeing – Peter McLaughlin
- ESC Director Development and Natural Resources – Lindsay Usher
- ESC Cultural Planning and Development Officer – Monika McInerney
- ESC Economic Development Officer – Sarah Cooper

Eurobodalla Shire Council acknowledges the integral role arts and culture has in celebrating, promoting and developing the Shire's distinctive characteristics, natural and built environments, social histories, cultural diversity, economic vitality, sense of place, pride and wellbeing. Through the *Arts and Cultural Services Policy*³ Council has made a commitment to:

- increase availability for access to and participation in the broad spectrum of high quality arts and cultural experiences;
- increase opportunities for individuals/groups to engage in and develop their skills, understanding and appreciation of the range of arts practices;
- increase the profile of the value for the provision of arts and cultural activity, through the active promotion of the vibrant cultural lifestyle in the Shire; and
- provide leadership, inspiration and advocacy for the Shire's ongoing cultural development.

The Policy is at Appendix 1.

The consultation for the current *Eurobodalla Shire Cultural Plan 2006 – 2010* (2006) revealed that the most significant issue was the lack of appropriate and affordable arts and cultural facilities at the local, district and regional level. The cultural plan identified that the range of venues in the Shire available for use for arts and cultural purposes had real constraints for the successful delivery of arts and cultural activities.

The Plan stated that the shortfalls related to inappropriateness of size, access, affordability and characteristics such as lighting, acoustics, storage, and seating specific to their intended use. The plan also recognised that there are different needs and solutions for the various communities across the Shire and that this is an important element for Council with regard to ongoing provision, maintenance and management.

Council has indicated its commitment to improve arts and cultural infrastructure stating that it aims to provide sustainable and accessible regional, local and neighbourhood recreational and community facilities across the Shire in accordance with adopted plans.⁴

During the consultations for the Cultural Plan, residents expressed desire for a wider range of cultural activities than currently existed for all sectors of the community, with a particular aspiration for developing a Shire-wide identity.

³Eurobodalla Shire Council Arts and Cultural Services Policy, Nov 2009

⁴ Eurobodalla Shire Council Management Plan, 2009-2014

These views were recently reinforced in the 2009 *Draft Eurobodalla Shire Social Plan's* consultations with over 1,800 Eurobodalla residents. Residents said they would like to:

- be recognised for the contribution they make to the community
- have expanded opportunities for work, learning, adventure and recreation
- feel supported to maintain independence and community involvement
- be active in the design and management of the built and natural environment
- maintain a strong sense of community identity and diversity.

Australian and overseas research shows that direct involvement by communities in arts activity can contribute significantly to individual and community wellbeing. Such involvement can enhance the efforts of government agencies in realising their policies for community wellbeing by for example:

- developing positive relationships with peers and the wider community
- gaining public recognition through the display of participants' work
- increasing self-esteem
- connecting with broader community networks through an increased sense of belonging
- enhancing skills and confidence e.g. by working with others in a team, communicating ideas and information, solving problems, planning and organising activities.⁵

There is also increasing interest in the role that the arts and cultural life of communities can contribute to economic sustainability and the quality of the built environment both in Australia and overseas. *Agenda 21 for Culture* is an international coalition of local governments working through the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)⁶. The organisation has developed the Agenda 21 for Culture Charter to promote culture in urban policy.

The key themes are culture and human rights, culture and governance, culture and sustainability, culture and social inclusion and culture and economy. The final Declaration of the founding Congress stated "*... culture lies at the heart ..., not just due to its intrinsic vocation of promoting human rights, shaping the knowledge society and improving quality of life for all, but also on account of its role in the creation of employment, regeneration and social inclusion.*"

During 2007 the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA NSW) hosted a representative from UCLG to visit Sydney and provide a day seminar for NSW local governments on Agenda 21 for Culture. The Associations Cultural Policy Officer has disseminated information to local governments on Agenda 21 for Culture and has promoted it as a model for local governments in NSW.

As of 2009, Redland City in Queensland is the only Australian local government to sign on to Agenda 21 for Culture however a number of other local governments including City of Port Phillip as well as organisations such as LGSA NSW, the Centre for Local Government University of Technology, Cultural Development Network Vic and Community Arts Network WA have obtained observer status.

The LGSA NSW currently advises that while local governments in New South Wales have not adopted Agenda 21 for Culture at an organisational level, it is beginning to be referenced in local policy and planning. They further note that Agenda 21 for Culture provides significant conceptual support for those working in the arts in Local Government and that the work that NSW councils are doing in the arts often relates to the Agenda 21 for Culture Articles, especially the 'Undertakings'.

Eurobodalla Shire Council need not sign on to Agenda 21 for Culture however it may find the documentation available on the website useful in formulating its future cultural plan. This report provides a way forward for Council to deliver against its policies and for the Shire to accrue the benefits of its investment in arts infrastructure and cultural programs.

⁵Deborah Mills and Paul Brown *Art and Wellbeing* Jan 2004 (example provided by VicHealth)

⁶United Cities and Local Governments Working Group on Culture. *Agenda 21 for Culture* (undated).
<http://www.agenda21culture.net>

3. Project Methodology

This project has been overseen by Council's Sunset Committee and was undertaken in the following stages.

Stage 1 – Project Inception

- Inception meetings were held with the Project Officer (Cultural Planning and Development Officer) to clarify and confirm the project outcomes and milestones, identification of relevant plans, reports and other documents and, identification of key stakeholders.
- The consultants visited all Council facilities used for arts activities and some of the other non-Council owned facilities.
- Face to face interviews were held with key community informants to provide preliminary information and to gain 'first-hand' insights into the issues and opportunities. These included Eurobodalla Tourism, South East Regional Arts, the PerfEx Group, and a wide sample of key organisations such as the Montague Arts and Crafts Society, the South Coast Music Society, Montague Choristers, and the Bay Theatre Players. Meetings with key Council staff were also held – the Social Planner, Youth Worker, Library Manager, Facilities Manager, and the Open Space and Recreation Planner. These initial consultations helped to inform the format of the consultation program.
- Council's existing plans and reports were reviewed to provide background, context and policy positions of Council.

Stage 2 – Consultation

There were three components to Stage 2 consultation activities which are noted as follows.

Three questionnaires were developed to gain quantitative information about the arts and cultural landscape. The Shire's primary and secondary schools, art and community organisations, and individual artists were invited to respond to the questionnaires. *A copy of each questionnaire is at Appendix 2.*

Participation in the questionnaires was promoted through the local media, advertisements in the Council page in the local papers, and on radio. The questionnaires were made available in hard copy and could be downloaded from the Council's website. Each of the users of council facilities was encouraged to respond to the questionnaire. A summary of responses to issues affecting organisations and artists is discussed further in Section 5 (Consultation Overview). Data from the questionnaires is discussed in Section 6 (Cultural Mapping).

The consultants met with and sought input to the study from the following Committees or inter-agency groups: the Youth Advisory Committee, Access Committee, Eurobodalla combined Chambers of Commerce, the Sunset Committee (this Project's Steering Committee) and Arts Exchange (a meeting of local artists and arts groups which happens quarterly at various locations across the Shire).

Public workshops were held across the Shire including one in Narooma, one in Moruya and two in Batemans Bay. These were advertised in the local papers, through Council's website and monthly e-newsletter, on local radio and by direct email to various contact lists. The workshops were open to the general public to attend. *Transcripts of meetings and workshops are detailed in Appendix 3.*

The workshops were intended to elicit information about what facilities in the Shire are used, by whom and for what purposes, what aspects of the facilities worked for arts use and what barriers affected use of facilities. This approach was applied to the performing arts as well as the visual arts as these art forms have different facility requirements.

Stage 3: Mapping the Arts and Cultural Landscape

Information from the questionnaires and consultations has been used to describe the arts and cultural landscape throughout the Shire and includes:

- arts activities by art form (eg music, dance, theatre, visual arts, literature, crafts)
- the types, locations, and clusters where the activity is occurring

- the venues currently used by artists, arts and cultural organisations and the community for arts and cultural activity and how they are used.

Stage 4 – Identifying Key Infrastructure Needs

Based on the information gathered through the consultation, assessments of each of Council-owned facilities (excluding outdoor venues such as parks and ovals) used for arts purposes and Council plans, infrastructure issues and needs have been identified.

4. Community Snapshot

Eurobodalla Shire located on the south coast of New South Wales is characterised by the quality of its natural coastal environment – the beaches, lakes, inlets, wetlands and large tracks of native forest.

The main towns of Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma continue to develop their own distinctive urban characters. There are also a large number of settlements throughout the Shire creating small communities of geographic interest and character. This settlement pattern of the Shire is important when considering accessibility to arts infrastructure.

The current estimated resident population of the Shire is around 37,000. The population growth of the Eurobodalla Shire remains well ahead of the state average as it has for the past two decades; however, the rate of growth is declining.⁷ The Shire is expected to experience an increase of over 8,200 people to 44,794 by 2021, at an average annual growth rate of 1.36% per annum over 15 years.

The Shire has a much higher and growing proportion of retirees than the state average and a lower proportion of young people. This census period has revealed some predicted trends such as the increase of inward migration of retirees (50-65 years).⁸

The 2006 Census tells us that the Eurobodalla Shire has an ageing population and a median age of 47 years compared to 37 for NSW. Between 1996 and 2006, the number of children aged 0-12 decreased by 7% while people aged over 80 increased by 54%. This trend is expected to continue with a relatively static percentage of children and an increase in the percentage of seniors by the year 2030.⁹ Local modeling estimates that the number and percentage of people aged over 65 in the Eurobodalla Shire will rise from 7,900 or 22.8% in 2006 to over 10,350 people or 24.2% by 2016 and to about 13,500 people or 26.7% by 2031.¹⁰

The planning, design and programming for community infrastructure should take into account this ageing population profile. For example, should the Council continue to invest at the same level in infrastructure that supports active sports aimed at a youthful population? Should Council consider increasing its investment in other community infrastructure to support the interests and recreational pursuits of its ageing population?

The Shire also expects a growth in retirees and citizens on government benefit. Current unemployment trends at almost double the state average are also expected to continue.¹¹ It will therefore be important to consider the affordability of arts and cultural opportunities.

An analysis of the jobs held by the resident population in Eurobodalla Shire in 2006 shows the three largest employment sectors were:

Retail Trade (2,058 persons or 16.9%)
Health Care and Social Assistance (1,419 persons or 11.6%)
Accommodation and Food Services (1,405 persons or 11.5%)¹²

This is likely to reflect the needs of the resident population and the strong tourism market. The Shire is unusual in that 37% of ratepayers are non-residents with just over 11% of the ratepayers being residents of the ACT. A key demographic feature of the LGA is that the Shire's population can increase from 37,000 to 140,000 during the peak holiday period.¹³

The characteristics of the Shire's population can influence the level of and type of participation in arts activities. The creativity and culture of a community, if revealed through the arts, and if

⁷Eurobodalla Shire Council Management Plan 2009-2013

⁸Ibid

⁹Draft Eurobodalla Social Plan 2012-2015

¹⁰Ibid

¹¹Eurobodalla Shire Council Management Plan 2009-2013

¹²Community Profile statistics from Council Web Site

¹³Ibid

made visible and accessible, can contribute to how the community perceives it's self, its vitality and sustainability. It can also contribute to the character and give meaning to places, which can also be a significant attractor to visitors.

5. Consultation Summary

The consultation program was designed to gather information on arts and cultural activity and where it is taking place in Eurobodalla Shire. It also sought to identify and confirm values and traditions associated with the arts and cultural activity. The intention of the consultation program was to use the consultations in association with other research to provide a basis for the identification of opportunities and constraints and, assess demand for the development of cultural infrastructure in the Shire.

Aims

The rationale for the consultation was based on the need to:

1. Identify stakeholder issues.
2. Identify key infrastructure needs.
3. Prioritise stakeholder issues.
4. Provide strategic direction for arts and cultural development.

Objectives

The focus of the consultation was on informing and involving stakeholders at all stages of the study. To fulfil the requirements of the brief the consultants identified that the project must:

- be informed by a sound, sequential methodology and understanding of current and past policy and planning as well as other factors that will impact on the delivery of arts infrastructure
- undertake a creative and strategic consultation process, which will provide a diverse range of opportunities for participation, promote dialogue and identify common ground
- be an advocate for community aspirations and concerns and provide information to inform the development of arts infrastructure.

Methodology

The methodology was guided by a rationale to ensure that multiple opportunities for people to participate in the consultations were provided. This has been facilitated by a five-stage process which included the following:

1. Identification of key stakeholders.
2. Preparation of consultation plan for agreement with the client.
3. Consultation Promotions
 - Council's webpage.
 - Council's monthly e-news.
 - Advertisements in the local paper.
 - Local radio interviews.
 - Distribution of information via ESC CDO networks.
 - Distribution of information via Sunset Committee networks.
 - Follow-up phone calls to encourage attendance.
4. Consultation
 - Eurobodalla Council – key staff members.
 - 21 one-on-one interviews with key community informants.
 - Questionnaires designed for and issued to all primary and secondary schools, community groups and individual artists. (Over 300 questionnaires were distributed to individuals, community groups, organisations and businesses).
 - Committee consultations: Sunset Committee (Steering Committee for the study), Youth Advisory Committee, Access Committee, Eurobodalla Combined Chambers of Commerce.
 - Locality based workshops for community groups and individuals in Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma.
 - Eurobodalla Tourism.

- South East Regional Arts.
- PerfEx.
- Arts Exchange.
- Access to questionnaire forms via Council Chambers and Council webpage.
- Combination of daytime and evening consultations to facilitate broader participation.

5. Analysis and Evaluation of the consultation data.

Key Findings

Common themes and issues emerged throughout the consultations with individual artists, cultural groups, community organisations and relevant Eurobodalla Council staff.

The predominant feature which emerged was that though there is a healthy diversity of arts practice across the Shire, there is a lack of cohesion resulting in fragmented activity concentrated in geographically based clusters.

The overwhelming consistency of response by those who participated in the consultations indicate that despite these organisations and artists being adept at using any space available, a lack of suitable spaces for arts practice in the Shire is hindering the capacity for participation in and development of the arts in this community.

Participants were asked to identify issues for consideration in the provision of arts infrastructure across the Shire. The priority issues for arts infrastructure provision were:

General/Shire wide:

- cost of renting/hiring spaces
- insufficient promotion of what is available/lack of central information site
- lack of ADSL Internet access
- uncomfortable (drafty, cold, hot, not clean) spaces in which to work & meet
- insufficient external arts funding coming into the Shire
- cost and lack of funding to pay for tutors
- need for greater access to skills development
- cost/access to insurance
- lost opportunities to attract visiting artists

Batemans Bay Area

- lack of specific purpose designed/built space – exhibition and performance space (varying sizes were suggested)
- lack of sufficient workshop spaces for rehearsals and visual arts

Moruya Area

- lack of sufficient storage space
- insufficient venues suitable for small-scale performance

Narooma Area

- lack of sufficient workshop space available for permanent and casual use
- lack of a specific purpose designed/built space (accessible to the public) – exhibition and performance
- lack of sufficient storage space

The Recreation Survey undertaken by Council in 2009 has reinforced these views. In response to the question seeking respondents' thoughts of the recreation opportunities in their area, arts spaces were rated poorly - 65% of respondents were of the view that performing arts spaces were poor, 65% rated workshop studio spaces as poor and 52% viewed exhibition spaces as poor. These were considered to be the worst facilities in the Shire according to respondents.

Not surprisingly, the **key improvements** suggested that would assist organisations/artists with their arts development were:

General/Shire wide

- affordable arts venues
- availability of grant funding in the Shire/more Shire funding to the arts
- higher profile and promotion of the arts and arts groups
- access to and funding for quality tutors/access to professional development workshops
- support for artists emerging into professional practice
- full-time arts officer employed by Council
- improved quality of exhibitions
- improved local facilities
- greater cooperation/coordination between arts groups

Batemans Bay Area

- suitably designed venue for performing arts suitable for visiting performers
- a place for the celebration of culture
- storage space
- centrally located exhibition space (some said community gallery and others a regional gallery)

Moruya Area

- visual arts workshop space (print)
- good venue for performing arts
- exhibition space with a good public profile (some said community and some said regional gallery)
- storage space
- quality touring exhibitions

Narooma Area

- an integrated arts precinct
- a performing arts space
- workshop areas (visual/performing arts) for casual and permanent use
- exhibition space that is accessible with a good public profile
- storage space

Transcripts of workshop and committee consultations is at Appendix 3.

Appendix 4A and Appendix 4B detail the use of commercial, community and Council venues for the visual and performing arts. The information was obtained through the consultation process.

6. Cultural Mapping

The Situation Analysis is a cultural mapping activity and is being undertaken to analyse the arts and cultural activity and infrastructure of the Shire.

Effective cultural mapping and assessment is a process of gathering an extremely diverse range of quantitative and qualitative information about a place in order to build up a picture or character map of that place. It also involves listing of facilities, services and activities and the range and types of arts practice occurring within a community, an area or district. This information can then be used for an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats brought to bear on a place's cultural identity and cultural development potential. Community consultation is a part of that process, and is generally a vehicle for gathering qualitative information.

A diverse range of qualitative information (from the public workshops, meetings with advisory groups, key informant interviews and other directories) and quantitative information (from the Artist and Organisation questionnaires) has been gathered to build a picture and character map of the Shire's cultural life.

Level of Participation in the Arts

The community of Eurobodalla is actively involved in the arts as demonstrated by the large number of community organisations (about 65) that have been established primarily for the purpose of enabling participation in arts activity or for which a major part of its role is in support of this activity. This is a substantial number of organisations for the size of the Shire's population.

Some organisations have sizeable memberships with the Batemans Bay Theatre Players and the South Coast Music Society having 200 members each. The Batemans Bay Arts and Crafts Society, the Montague Arts and Crafts Society and the South East Modern Art Group each have over 100 members. The Batemans Bay University of the Third Age boasts a very large membership of around 500. While not all of its activities are arts related, it does provide many opportunities for participation in the arts, such as dance, writing, music and craft classes for example.

With an average membership for each group being around 100, it could be estimated that **there are around 6,500 Shire residents who are participating in arts through arts organisations or organisations that host arts activities. This represents nearly 21% of the Shire's adult population (18 years and over).**¹⁴ This estimate does not include those people who attend performances, events, films etc.

The survey undertaken in the development of Council's *Positive Aging Strategy* (2009) indicated high levels of community participation by older people living in the Shire. Two of the five most popular responses was attending an organised club or community group (64.2%) and visiting a library (63.1%). Of the three least popular activities, one was attending an education class, workshop or course (27%) and the other was attending a sporting or cultural event as a spectator (30.1%). These participation rates indicate that while attending a workshop/education activity is not as popular as other activities there is an active level of interest by older members of the community in life-long learning and participating as members of an audience for sports and arts events. As the older population is relatively high in the Shire, these participation rates are significant.

The Children Services Network's input into the Shire's *Draft Social Plan* identified a number of positive activities in the Shire that support children and their families. These included traditional Aboriginal dancing, Aboriginal language classes for adults, story time library program, library services for children, arts and cultural activities, music for kids, Youth cafes, drumming and belly dancing.

¹⁴Eurobodalla Shire Council Community Profile, ABS 2006

In terms of audience sizes and attendance at arts events, the Moruya Film Society regularly attracts an audience of between 30 and 40 each film showing, the Batemans Bay Theatre has up to 1600 to 1700 attendees per year, and the South Coast Music Society can attract up to 300 for a classical music performance (held five times a year). **The consultation however revealed that while residents will travel for participation, they are generally reluctant to travel across the Shire to attend activities unless there is a major attraction or significant reason to do so.**

Because of the relatively low and fixed incomes of residents in the Shire, affordability of participation (through fees, venue hire and exhibition costs) and attendance (ticket prices) was indicated in the consultations as a factor in residents' participation in the cultural life of the Shire. Most organisations keep their annual membership fees low with the average being around \$25.

Artists and Art Form

While it is difficult to assess the number of individual artists living in the Shire, 53 artists responded to the artist questionnaire. This rate of participation is understood to be lower than the actual number of artists who are residents in the Shire. At 41%, the majority of respondents stated that they practiced their art as a hobby while 17% said they earned an income from their arts practice and 25% said they earned some of their income through their arts practice.

Artists are most likely to earn their income from selling and exhibiting their work outside of the Shire given the low level of quality exhibition spaces.

While it is not known how many artists identify as Aboriginal, the South East Arts Region (SEAR) Organisation estimates 50 practising artists living in the south coast region are of Aboriginal background. Through the consultations, it was evident that there is some participation by Aboriginal artists in mainstream arts organisations and arts activities.

Eurobodalla arts and community organisations host a diverse range of activities to encourage participation in the arts and in developing skills. These range from skill development workshops by for example, the Arts Council of Eurobodalla, scholarships (St Cecilia Music Scholarship), and exhibition opportunities for members (eg South Coast Pastel Society).

Of major significance, is the coming together of members to practice their art, develop their skills, share knowledge and to be actively involved in their communities.

The consultations and review of activities show that **there are few opportunities to access professional arts skill training and development in the Shire.** Respondents also advised that the quality of exhibiting experience is compromised by the lack of quality exhibition venues.

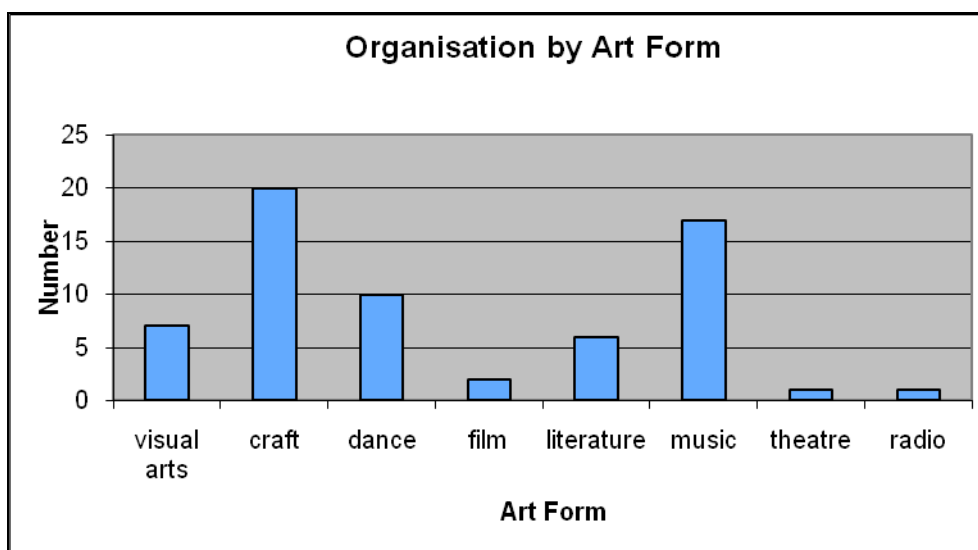


Figure 2: Organisation by Art Form. Source: Situation Analysis. Organisations Questionnaire

The traditional crafts and music are the most popular areas for participation in the arts in the Shire as indicated by Figure 2 above. Of the approximately 65 local arts organisations in the Shire, 31% are focused on participating in the crafts. These are mainly craft guilds such as patchwork, quilting, embroidery, textiles, and woodwork. (Each also have large numbers of members). These organisations mainly support hobbyists while support for professional contemporary craft practice is negligible.

Music organisations are also numerous at 26% with strengths in singing, folk, drumming and classical music. The two large-scale annual music events, the Moruya Jazz Festival and the Blues and Rockabilly Festival, as well as the South Coast Music Society's presentation of five classical concerts annually, add to the strong interest in music by Shire residents. Also, the numerous clubs, hotels and small café outlets (such as North St Bar, and Monet's) host live music, which has created a lively 'music gig' scene. The consultations also revealed a high level of informal music activity such as singing groups, instrumental groups and small bands commonly meeting and performing in people's homes.

From the workshop held with the Shire's Youth Advisory Committee, music is extremely popular with the teens and under 25's particularly through private parties, competitions, dance parties, concerts and garage bands. Although interest had declined, committee participants advise that interest is growing again.

A variety of forms of dance are offered by 15% of the organisations. These include Scottish, folk, belly, line, classical, and Latin American dancing.

While there are only a small number of organisations supporting opportunities to participate in the visual arts (10%), the membership of these organisation is significantly high which indicates a strong interest by residents in activities such as painting, pastel drawing, life drawing, printing, and photography.

There are only a few organisations that focus on writing and poetry. There appears to be only one organisation offering opportunities to participate in theatre, the Batemans Bay Theatre Players, however they have a large membership and have significant impact on the arts landscape of the Shire with a program of performance across the calendar year. There is one community radio station and two community film groups.

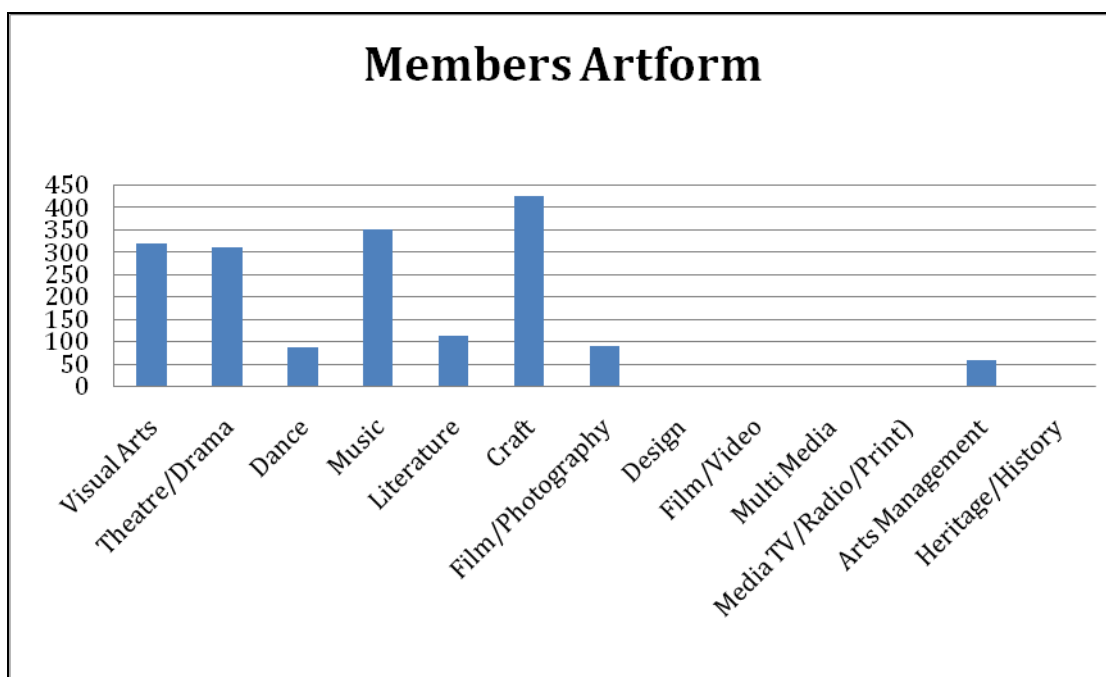


Figure 3: Membership of Organisations by Art Form. Source: Situation Analysis. Organisations Questionnaire

Most of the groups that provide arts related activities are informal, unfunded and not incorporated. This suggests a high level of volunteerism to sustain these organisations and their level of activity. As well-being indicators show, volunteerism and involvement in community activity provides strong health and well-being benefits to a community.¹⁵

This high level of voluntary support may be associated with the large proportion of active retirees who live in the Shire. These organisations are heavily dependent on the leadership and interests of their committees, chairpersons and organisers. This therefore means that while some organisations have longevity others may come and go. Consistent with this profile is the informal nature of networks within the Shire.

The consultants were advised of the difficulty these organisations are facing to recruit new or younger people to assist with the administration of these organisations and to attend committee meetings. Many community groups are finding that as their members age, they no longer wish to spend their volunteer time in such roles.

As many of the groups are unincorporated, they are unable to attract funding for growth, on-going skill development of their members, or paid staff. For those who are incorporated, while their membership fees are kept low to attract members, fees only make a small financial contribution to running the organisations.

Arts Activity Clusters

The cultural activity throughout the Shire is dispersed between its towns and settlements with the three main areas being Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma. As can be expected, the arts organisations are administratively based in these towns in the Shire as shown in Figure 3 below.

¹⁵Volunteering Australia, Submission to the Productivity Commission on the Draft Research Report – Contribution of the Not for Profit Sector. November 2009

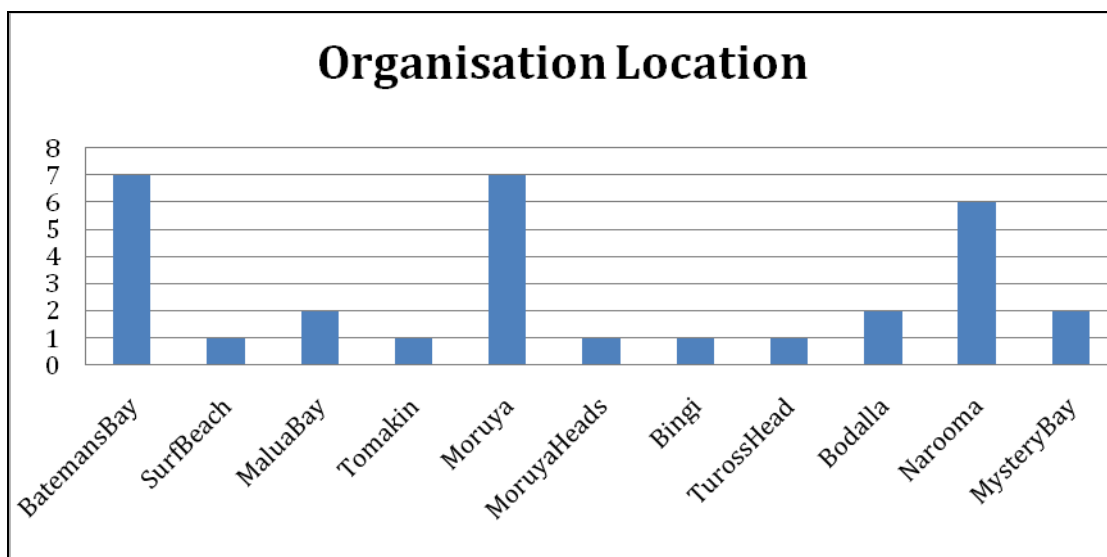


Figure 4: Organisation Location Clusters. Source: Situation Analysis. Organisations Questionnaire

The research suggests that these clusters have developed around the historical development of the main towns and because people are not willing or able to travel the distances between the towns. Participants advise that they look within their own community for opportunities for participation. **The consultations also revealed that there is a lack of knowledge and visibility of what opportunities are available throughout the Shire.**

With the activity dispersed between these communities, given the Shire's small population and its relatively small scale, it is difficult to achieve a critical mass to support large-scale audiences (other than large events like a festival). This geographic spread also means that there is minimal networking or communication between groups across the Shire and an absence of information sharing. Interestingly, in the consultations, there was a common desire to learn more about what is happening in the arts across the Shire.

While the dispersed, low profile and informal nature of activity are barriers, it is the small scale, intimate nature of arts and cultural activity that gives the arts in the Shire its distinguishing feature.

Schools

All primary and secondary schools were issued with the questionnaire for schools. The aim of the questionnaire was to identify both curricular and extra-curricular activity in the arts as well as identify if and how school facilities are used by the wider community for arts activity.

Unfortunately, only two schools in the Shire responded to the questionnaire therefore data related to the level of arts activity and development supported by the local schools is limited. However, anecdotal information has been provided to the consultant team that indicate that each high school offers arts curricula – visual arts, music, drama and photography. Extra-curricular activities might include for example drama performances and art exhibitions. Some of the primary schools offer opportunities to participate in choirs, visual arts camps and dancing.

As with most schools, arts curricula and extra-curricular activities are often shaped by the teachers' skills, and the interest and support of the Principal and the School Board.

Several schools in the Shire have received Federal Government Funding to build multi-purpose school halls. These facilities are likely to support a range of school-based arts activity.

Describing the Clusters

The major towns and villages in the Shire have developed distinctly different cultural landscapes. A description of their character is provided below.

Batemans Bay Area

Batemans Bay has developed as the largest town in the Shire, functioning as a tourist resort and retirement mecca with a significant service and commercial centre. The town and catchment area accommodates about 45% of the Shire's population (around 15,500 residents) and 47% of the Shire's senior population (between 65 and 84 years).¹⁶

Within the town centre, there is an active cultural life with popular concerts and performances presented by the clubs and pubs i.e. the Soldiers Club, Bowling Club, Catalina Country Club and hotels, while the cafes such as Monet's and North St Bar present small-scale music acts which generally attract younger audiences.

The strong classical touring music concert program (currently five concerts a year) offered by the South Coast Music Society and the annual Blues Festival now to be located in Batemans Bay reinforces its position in music offerings. Other performing arts offerings include Batemans Bay Cinema's live streaming of international opera and theatre and the popular Bay Theatre Players. While these performances attract small committed local audiences who are generally older, anecdotally, there is a small but growing interest by visitors from Canberra and Sydney to attend these events. While there may generally be older audiences for performing arts, clever programming such as *Seussical The Musical* appeals to a youthful cast and a younger, family oriented audience.

The Eurobodalla Shire Library presents literary events and other activities and is located at Hanging Rock.

Residents of the Batemans Bay area show significant levels of participation in the arts, mostly by the area's retired population. There are several strong community groups which have very high membership, particularly in the arts and crafts with dancing growing in popularity. The Bay Theatre Players has been operating now for over 10 years and has a strong following. The University of the Third Age (U3A) which runs a number of arts classes has over 500 members while the Batemans Bay Arts and Crafts Society has around 120 members.

There are many other active local art and craft groups such as the Pastel Society, Embroiders and Woodcraft Guilds, and the quilters. All these groups hold workshops and exhibit wherever space can be found, even in people's homes.

The ARTery at Mossy Point, Tosh Gallery and some individual artists hold occasional professional arts workshops at their studios and galleries.

The Council-owned Community Centre in the centre of Batemans Bay is a popular venue and is used by many community groups and not-for-profit organisations for a range of activities, including various dance and U3A groups. This facility is in high demand and is heavily booked, turning away up to four bookings per week. Through the consultations participants advised that *"activities take place in anywhere that can found whether suitable or not"*.

The Batemans Bay Museum is situated adjacent to the Community Centre, and while it is only open to the public for a few hours a week, it now has an active management committee and a solid core of volunteers.

While there is energy and enthusiasm that sustains these community groups, the activities are dispersed and not obvious and there is little cohesion between them.

¹⁶Eurobodalla Shire Council Community Profile, ABS 2006

Given that much of the activity taking place is dispersed and often located in 'tucked away' spaces such as the Malua Bay and Tomakin Community Centres, the lack of visibility, fragmentation and lack of communication between groups is not surprising.

In summary, **at present there is no strong visible presence of the local arts and cultural life in the Bay area and there is no means either via co-location or organisationally for the groups and their activities to be revealed.** People find out about what is happening generally through word of mouth and their social networks.

Mogo

The small town of Mogo is primarily a town whose retail outlets are tailored to tourists. There are several art galleries (Ken Taber Studio and Gallery, Raw Art and Blues, Wattlebark [Batemans Bay Art and Craft Society], Amanda's of Mogo) as well as a variety of craft and jewellery outlets. Most of these activities would be described as micro businesses.

Moruya Area

Moruya is the administrative centre of the Eurobodalla Shire Council and is home to the Council Chambers. It has a small, thriving town and main street. It is characterised as having a strong sense of community. The reasons offered during the consultations for this were its size "*not too big, not too small*", atmosphere, character, older and heritage buildings, compactness, environmental setting with the backdrop of the hills and the river and the people who live in the area who have been attracted to these features. The town and its catchment has just over 30% (around 10,500) of the Shire's population.

Local visual arts and music is the core of the cultural life of Moruya. There are numerous small-scale exhibitions and music events (small bands) by local artists, which means that there is always something cultural happening in Moruya. The Jazz Festival, Basil Sellers Arts Prize and Exhibition, the River of Art Festival and Amplify (the youth band competition) are regular features of the annual arts Shire calendar which take place in Moruya. In addition, Council programs a series of exhibitions and events at the Mechanics Institute, which is also home to the Moruya Film Club. Arts Central, located in Riverside Park also offers a range of workshops and services, particularly for disadvantaged people in the community.

Gudhuga Aboriginal Corporation has plans to establish an arts, cultural and language centre at its offices and land that runs between Queen St and Mirrabooka Ave. This will provide opportunities for the region's Aboriginal artists to attend skill development workshops and to exhibit their work.

The Shire has the highest ATSI population when compared with other South Coast local government areas and Council anticipates that the ATSI population will grow into the future. Consultations undertaken for the development of the new Social Plan indicate people's interest in developing knowledge and increasing their understanding of the local indigenous culture. Aboriginal artists involved in the consultation expressed interest in contributing to building awareness and understanding between the Aboriginal and wider Shire communities. This is an area which has scope for program development through a number of Council's programs and services.

The Moruya Historical Society runs a community museum in a heritage building in Campbell Street and holds archival material and objects on the area's European settlement and history. Over the years, the organisation has successfully obtained Commonwealth and state funding for publications and for undertaking critical maintenance of the building.

The Moruya Bowling Club and the Air Raid Tavern often present local and touring performances.

Groups meet and provide classes, exhibit and stage performances using any venue that is available. These include the RSL Hall, Mechanics Institute, CWA Hall, the Masonic Hall, Bowling Club, school and Church halls and the Moruya Heads Surf Club. Most of these facilities are centrally located within the town of Moruya.

In summary, there appears to be a stronger arts presence for the Moruya area and there is a perception that the arts contribute to the activation, vitality and sense of community. In turn, the local community is supportive of and has embraced this aspect of living in this town. The arts have a reasonably good profile and are accessible as the venues are located within the town with easy access to parking.

Bodalla

While Bodalla is a small population, the town has seen a recent renaissance with new businesses on the main street. A cluster of micro 'cultural businesses' has now been created with studio-galleries, commercial gallery, surfing memorabilia museum, a bakery, café, clothes, design, and furniture shops. The Bodalla Community Hall has a distinctive rural character but with limited, ageing infrastructure and poor climate control is largely overlooked by groups looking for venues.

Narooma Area

Narooma has a catchment of about 24% of the Shire's population (around 8,000 residents) and is developing a small hub of arts and cultural activity around the School of Arts site. Located in the middle of the town, the site houses the Montague Arts and Crafts Society which has over 100 local visual arts and crafts practitioners (mostly hobbyists) and the Narooma Kinema. The Arts Society is in the small cottage and has a small gallery and workshop space. The Cinema is growing in popularity as it continues to expand its programming, now including live streaming of international opera and theatre.

The Services Club next door hosts Club Muzo, a jamming session for young musicians, while O'Briens Hotel opposite hosts popular bands. The Golf Club located over the 'cliffs' of Narooma presents a program of touring contemporary music.

The Montague Choristers with its sizeable membership (50) perform a classical repertoire in the nearby Catholic Church. Choristers also attract high quality visiting international and nationally acclaimed classical musicians to perform in Narooma.

Central Tilba

This small village has many micro craft retail outlets and uses its twin halls as community spaces for plays, exhibitions and concerts.

7. Strengths and Weaknesses

The following table provides a summary of perceived strengths and weakness that characterise the arts and cultural landscape of the Shire. The information is drawn from consultations and observation by the consultants.

Table 1 Strengths and Weakness

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinctive coastal, forest and estuarine environment and its associated relaxed and informal lifestyle. • People love living in the Shire. • Strong community bonds have been established in many of the smaller towns and villages due to their size, setting, and history. This supports a high level of personal networking within these communities. • The opportunities for participation and social networking offered by the myriad of small formal and informal community and arts groups. • These small groups also offer an intimate setting for gatherings. • Word of mouth is powerful and a common means of communicating what's happening. • Community support for Council's role in arts and cultural development. • Strong self-reliance and independence from government funding. • Traditional community halls contribute to the character of Bodalla, Turross, Durras, Nelligen, Central Tilba. • The schools provide community resources which support exhibition and some performance. • The Clubs host and present music performances and have venues for hire. • Strong involvement in the arts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ large memberships ○ many groups ○ intelligence/skills in the retirees ○ large volunteering base • The longevity of some of the arts organisations such as the Bay Theatre Players, the South Coast Music Society and the Montague Arts and Crafts Society. • The high number of and participation in craft guilds and choirs. • Several small, dedicated volunteer organisations are attracting high quality international and national music performance to the Shire in jazz, classical, instrumental and choral music. • The two music festivals (blues and jazz) are well established and supported by the local community and attract visitors. • Access to world-class opera and theatre by live streaming in the north (Batemans Bay) and south (Narooma) of the Shire. • The wealth of micro arts businesses, in particular art galleries and artist studios providing tourism product. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of visibility of much of the cultural activity that takes place in the Shire because of its small scale and informality. • Arts and cultural activity due to location and scale is fragmented. • It's hard to achieve a critical mass to sustain large facilities. • People are reluctant to travel within the Shire for attendance and participation in the arts. • Perception of parochialism and a fear of change. • Lack of networking/ communication across the Shire • Council's community facilities are not centrally located within towns/villages and are often difficult to access. • Council's limited financial base. • Limited public infrastructure for arts and cultural activity. • Lack of clarity about ownership and management of community infrastructure. • Existing multipurpose venues do not support arts and cultural uses due to factors including poor sound quality, lack of sound attenuation, lack of good natural light, lack of climate control, lack of wet floor spaces, etc • Access to facilities by people with disabilities is limited • Increasing costs for materials, equipment, transport and hire. • Lack of provision and take-up of web-based information. • Developmental and entrepreneurial capacity in the arts and cultural sector is underdeveloped. • Lack of professional opportunities for networking or skills development • Young people leave the Shire for employment and further education. • Lack of formal organisational structure that can act as host or umbrella organisation for financial management, public liability insurance, information clearing house, legal entity for accepting grants on behalf of un-constituted groups. • The socio-economic profile which is characterised by high numbers of people on low/ fixed incomes and an aging population. • Lack of recognition for the contribution by micro-arts businesses (eg studio gallery, craft shops, antiques, sole trader designers, craft retail outlets, |

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A growing interest in learning about and engaging with the local Aboriginal culture. • The Shire is well located to access cultural programs in the regional centres of Canberra, Wollongong, Nowra and Bega. | <p>bookshops)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong reliance on a day-time economy and for social activity. • A greater investment by Council in sport and recreation infrastructure including purpose built facilities, despite an aging population. • Lack of familiarity of funding opportunities for programs and arts projects. • Lack of centralised, easily accessible information on venues for hire (including name, location, contact, cost, size, kitchen, tables/chairs etc). • Lack of centralised, accessible information about arts and cultural activities and opportunities. • Lack of stepping stones for skills development • Dance is under-developed and not supported by a suitable venue in the Shire • Unrealised potential to work with SEAR and other regional arts bodies for arts and cultural programming • Surrounding regions have a stronger arts profile and view their profile and the quality of activity as an asset. |
|---|---|

8. Benchmarking Review

The objective of the Benchmarking Study was to compile and compare information on arts and cultural services that councils provide, the level of council involvement and support with staff, facilities and program funding in selected Local Governments. The aim of the study is to identify elements of best-practice arts infrastructure provision and lessons learned which may inform the future development of cultural facilities in Eurobodalla Shire.

The councils who participated in the study were selected for their proximity to Eurobodalla Shire, factors in common with Eurobodalla demographics or leadership in culture and the arts.

- **Bathurst Regional Council** – inland rural shire, some common demographics, first purpose built regional gallery in NSW.
- **Bega Valley Shire Council** – neighbour, regional focus, aging population, tourists.
- **City of Mandurah** – coastal shire in Western Australia, great example of independently operated but council supported performing arts centre and regional arts gallery, tourists, successful arts festival.
- **Great Lakes Council** – coastal shire 320k north of Sydney, common demographic factors, tourism, cultural plan currently on exhibition, undeveloped arts infrastructure.
- **Greater Taree Council** – coastal shire on mid-north coast of NSW, similar demographics, long history of support for the arts including entertainment centre and regional art gallery.
- **Queanbeyan City Council** – inland shire located next to Capital Territory, good example of a council supported performing arts centre.
- **Rural City of Wangaratta** – north-eastern Victorian shire, regional focus, tourists, successful jazz festival, regional gallery and artist studio and a newly built performing arts centre all supported by council.
- **Shoalhaven City Council** – neighbour, tourists, strong commitment to arts, cultural facilities and music.

The consultants approached the Benchmarking Study with key questions:

- What is the nature of the population of the Shire?
- What is Council's operating budget?
- Does Council support a Regional Gallery or Performing Arts Centre?
- If so what services/facilities do they provide?
- Does Council have an art collection?
- Does Council have arts and cultural policy and plans which underpin Council contributions to the cultural life of the Shire?
- What are the operating budgets for the cultural facilities?
- How many cultural/arts officers are employed by council?
- What other contributions does council make to the cultural life of the community/region?

Answers to questions were provided by interviews with key council staff and cultural facility managers and their staff as well as through on-line sources such as annual reports. Benchmarking these topics can be challenging and in some cases like comparing 'apples with oranges' however it can provide insights into how to optimize the effectiveness of support for arts and cultural activity. Themes which have emerged so far include:

- **Advising and Networking the Arts** – Councils are extremely well placed to provide networking and advisory services through the development of data bases, resource material, newsletters and calendars of events.
- **Arts Spaces and Venues** – The most successful galleries and performing arts centres appear to be those which have strong community collaboration and strategic programming. The optimum location for these facilities is within easy walking distance from town centres.
- **Collection Management and Access** – Councils which have an established art collection are more likely to support a regional art gallery and foster visual art skills development in the local community.

- **Festivals** – Access to municipal infrastructure and resources provides valuable support for regional festivals.
- **Community Cultural Development** – supported and strengthened by the development and effective management/programming of cultural infrastructure.

Of the Councils in the benchmarking study, the Eurobodalla Shire while still predominantly of Anglo-Australian background, the population is more culturally diverse and older than the other NSW local government areas (LGAs).

The contributions to SEAR by Bega and Eurobodalla are similar in scale with Bega absorbing accommodation and building overheads for the SEAR position which is co-located within the Bega Valley Regional Gallery.

Most Councils' have made significant commitments to building arts and cultural infrastructure irrespective of size and budget with the establishment of a cultural facility or in some instances supporting a number of arts and cultural facilities including galleries, theatres, museums, studios and entertainment centres. In many instances the cultural facilities have been developed at different periods, are commonly stand-alone, purpose built facilities and have traditionally operated as independent facilities/functions within the Council structure.

Overall, gallery staffing is commonly less than performing arts and entertainment facilities with most of the Councils employing 1 FTE position for gallery staff while performing arts/entertainment facilities are more likely to have three or more FTE staff.

Bathurst, Bega, Taree and Wangaratta LGAs have had long-term commitments to the support of **regional** galleries while Queanbeyan and Wangaratta Councils have recently established performing arts facilities. The consultants have not been able to obtain budget figures for Wangaratta however the budget for the Q Theatre at Queanbeyan for 2009-10 is expected to be over \$850K. Where galleries have been integrated within a performing arts centre e.g. Mandurah and Queanbeyan, there is less resourcing dedicated to exhibition activity. Overall, costs for the regional galleries (including staff/programming) commonly vary from over \$100K to \$200K plus while performing arts facilities are generally close to or in excess of \$1M. Great Lakes Council was included at the request of Council as this LGA has similar characteristics to Eurobodalla Shire. While Great Lakes Council has no designated cultural workers or arts infrastructure they support three museums and maintain a school of arts building as well as 27 community halls. The Council contributes \$7K to Arts Mid North Coast (equivalent to SEAR organisation). Council has completed a master plan for the Forster School of Arts to extend the current facility (for community activity plus gallery). The Council is about to seek submissions to design the new facilities and will award a \$100K prize to the winning design. Council is providing support and financial assistance to the Mid North Coast Conservatorium Group who are lobbying for the establishment of a conservatorium on the mid north coast.

In summary, each of the Local Governments studied in the benchmarking exercise demonstrated a commitment to the development of cultural capacity although this to a lesser degree in Great Lakes LGA. Capacity ensures that communities have the resources they need to support their arts and cultural activity. **The benchmarking review has shown that providing cultural capacity requires a solid and on-going financial commitment to build, purchase, repair, renovate, upgrade or otherwise improve community cultural facilities such as performing arts centres and regional galleries.**

The design, delivery, management and facilitation of this type of cultural resource represents a major investment in terms of hard infrastructure provision and also on-going expenditure for staffing, programming, marketing, touring programs, educational outreach, operational costs, maintenance and technical up-grades. The consultants have been advised that performing arts centres across the country are subsidised from between \$600K to \$1.2M per annum. This covers items including staff, programming, administration support, marketing, maintenance, cleaning and insurances. While the venues are expected to raise funds to contribute to their programming and management, they are regarded as a community service rather than profit making enterprises. Those that have been operational for over twenty years and have well-established markets generally require lower subsidies.

Councils who participated in the benchmarking study recognised the importance of supporting the growth, preservation and study of permanent art collections and their role in ensuring that the community has access to their cultural heritage. In some cases expanding the function of existing community buildings to provide cultural hubs and cultural services at a localised level has provided a solution to infrastructure needs.

The consultants are of the view that Council would find it useful to undertake a regional tour of some arts and cultural facilities in its deliberations regarding the provision of arts and cultural infrastructure in the Shire. This could include Bega Valley Regional Gallery, Shoalhaven facilities including the Arts Centre which includes the regional gallery, entertainment centre, School of Arts and Milton Theatre and Queanbeyan City Council. While not included in the benchmarking study, there are several other facilities for Council to consider visiting. Wollongong City Council has had a long history of supporting arts and cultural infrastructure and supports a regional gallery and one of the more successful amateur theatres. The consultants would suggest that a trip to Queanbeyan would be enhanced by visits to the Tuggeranong Community Arts Centre and the recently completed Belconnen Arts Centre.

A Benchmarking Comparison Table which outlines the key comparative data is at Appendix 5. The consultants advise that while all endeavours were made to obtain consistent information from each LGA in some cases this has not been possible.

Recommendation

It is recommended:

1. **THAT** Council undertake a regional study tour of arts and cultural facilities as part of its deliberations regarding arts and cultural infrastructure provision for the Shire.

9. Facilities (Hard Infrastructure)

Assessment of Current Facilities

The following is a comprehensive assessment of the facilities within the Shire that are used and are available for use for arts purposes. The assessment is based on site visits, and the results of the consultation.

The purpose of the assessment is to provide a baseline of information which will be used to compare the nature of arts activity and expressed need with the suitability of facilities that are available. Arts use suitability has been described in terms of the facilities' current state, rather than what is possible with improvements.

Council's facilities have been assessed in detail as Council has direct responsibility for the ownership, management, maintenance, upgrading and development of these. When assessing the general condition of the facilities, the consultants did not have access to detailed condition reports on each Council facility. Therefore, the assessment has been made on the basis of general observations of each facility (roof and gutters, foundations, basic building structure, floor stability, ceilings, amenities etc) and consideration of suitability for arts use.

Community (e.g. CWA, church and school halls) and commercial facilities (e.g. licensed clubs) play an important role in supporting local arts activities. Councils usually have a limited role in non Council owned facilities due to the assets being in the ownership/responsibility of community or business entities. Financial investment in non-Council owned facilities can lead to confusion and a lack of clarity over management, accountability and decision-making and is generally not recommended as sound asset management practice.

An historical aspect of community facility development in the Shire suggests that there have been joint financial contributions from Council and community groups for the development of community facilities. There has also been a history of shared management or in some instances Council agreeing to take over ownership and responsibility for a community asset when a community group finds itself no longer in a position to manage and maintain the building. Council also has leasing arrangements in place with RSL NSW for access to the Mechanics Institute and the RSL Hall. **The consultants found that there is considerable confusion and misunderstanding regarding community facilities in the Shire both within Council and the community.**

It is understood that Council is appraising the shared management arrangements of some of the facilities with the view to Council resuming full management responsibility for them. The consultants acknowledge this as a positive step as it will clarify ownership and management responsibilities and enable Council to better implement its Asset Management Program.

With regard to community facilities owned by community groups, Council can play a support role in a variety of ways including: providing advice and guidance regarding the Development Application process, providing information and support to community organisations to access capital funding through government grants and philanthropic sources and in some instances, Council may consider providing low interest loans.

Throughout the consultation process, there were constant requests for accessible, readily available information regarding facilities available for hire from Council.

There are useful examples of hall hire information which may assist Council in considering how best to make information available such as the Parramatta Council web site¹⁷ which provides readily accessible information about type of venue, size, what it is suitable for, fees and charges, etc on community halls, arts facilities and sport and recreation venues.

¹⁷http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/culture_and_leisure/recreation/public_halls_and_centers

The availability and use of outdoor performance spaces was not part of the Situation Analysis Brief therefore there is no commentary or assessment of such venues within this study. Consideration of such venues will need to be considered in the development of the new cultural plan for the Shire.

Appendix 6 provides a detailed description of each of Council's community facilities. The information could be adapted to promote and profile Council's facilities for arts uses, even though in many cases their design and condition currently limit their suitability.

Overall Assessment

Functionality

Like facilities for sport that require a sprung floor for basketball or a turf/field of specific dimensions and characteristics for football, soccer, rugby, or netball, there are a basic set of requirements for safe practices, environmental health and basic functionality for art activities. For example

- *dance*: to be suitable for workshops, classes and rehearsals requires sprung timber floor, preferably mirrors, climate control, change rooms, acoustic separation from other spaces
- *visual arts workshops spaces (wet)*: for use with paints, clay and other wet working material require washing up area for brushes, containers etc, sink with paint/grease trap for proper disposal after washing, vinyl or sealed cement washable floor, storage, good lighting and ventilation/extractor
- *visual arts workshops (dry)*: for workshops and classes for drawing, textiles, woodworking etc requires cleanable floor, good lighting, plenty of power points (sometimes 3 phase power), good ventilation and storage
- *exhibition space*: (not for touring exhibitions requiring strict dust, humidity or light control) for the display of three and two dimensional and multi-media work requires natural as well as artificial directional lighting, hanging mechanisms, gallery standard walls, floor to accommodate heavy works without plinths, plinths, storage, multiple electricity outlets
- *performance space*: for dance, theatre and music. A basic performance space would have raked seating, a sprung stage floor, backstage, wings, dressing rooms (male and female), storage, loading dock (for sets), sound and lighting equipment, acoustic treatment tuned for music, acoustic separation from other spaces, sound/lighting control booth and foyer.

There are a large number of facilities across the Shire that the Shire's artists and arts/community organisations use for arts activities despite their limited functionality for arts uses - the facilities are commonly meeting rooms and multi-purpose halls. Unlike the basketball courts and sports fields, none of the buildings are purpose built to suit the specific requirements of the diverse range of arts interests and high levels of participation in the arts within the Shire. Furthermore, **the level of activity is constrained by the limited range of suitable spaces.**

From initial observations, it appears that most Council-owned/leased facilities used for arts purposes, appear to be in relatively poor condition. According to the participants in the consultations, these issues are impacting on the level of usage as well as the type of use of facilities.

All Council facilities are available for either casual or regular hire. Council use of the facilities for various art programs and activities (funded directly by Council or by other government sources) is limited to the libraries and the Mechanics Institute.

Due to the historical lack of investment in maintenance, there is a clear need to improve the overall image of the facilities. For example, by improvements in the way the facilities present to the street, provision of well-designed, prominent and consistent signage, and improved condition of the building fabric and amenities.

There are some aspects that work well and provide character or a positive ambience to a facility such as a timber floor, or large auditorium, or small comfortable meeting room. In most cases however, the facilities are only suited to a limited range of activities such as such as dry art/craft

activities, dance classes or performance that does not need acoustic treatment or will not unduly impact on neighbours.

With the exception of Batemans Bay Community Centre where booking requests exceed demand, there is an overall under-utilisation of Council managed community facilities. The factors contributing to this are likely to be that:

- the facilities are generally not centrally located or easily accessible (eg Tuross Progress Hall)
- the facilities are not designed to cater for the variety of arts uses in which the Shire's residents participate
- the condition of the facilities do not encourage use or are not welcoming (eg Bodalla Hall)
- information about the spaces and features of the facilities is not well known (eg the meeting room with new kitchen, Moruya Showground Pavilion) and not made available in an easily accessible form (eg via the Council's website)
- the hire fees for extended periods (day/weekend/week hire) may not be affordable and the fees may not reflect value for money
- lack of car parking, cleanliness, climate control and other features detracts from active use of the facilities
- with the exception of Dr MacKay Centre and the libraries, Council's use and programming of activities in the facilities is limited.

It must be stressed that under-utilisation does not equate to there being no demand or need for adequate community and arts facilities.

Facilities Management

Roles and Responsibilities

Many facilities owned/leased by Council were originally built on Council land by the community. The Council established Section 355A Committees responsible for their maintenance and management. Under this system, there has been little routine maintenance and in some instances, exclusive use has been practiced. While this has meant that there has been strong 'community ownership' of a facility, in contradiction there has not necessarily been strong 'community responsibility' of respective facilities.

In Council's Management Plan 2009-2014, Council has made a commitment to gradually phase out the Management Committees. Council is therefore gradually resuming responsibility and management for all of the facilities built on Council land. While this has and will cause some angst amongst the community as they may feel a loss of control of a facility in which they have voluntarily invested, it does mean that Council can assess their condition, future and implement a full asset management strategy. Over time, this is likely to reduce costs to small community groups and see a planned, strategic allocation of resources to manage and develop facilities for the future social sustainability and well-being of the community.

However, **the community still should play a strong advisory and volunteer role**. For those facilities remaining in the hands of a management committee such as the Moruya Showgrounds, the Tuross Progress Hall and the Durras Hall, the community should be provided with opportunities to advise if there are 'critical' building maintenance and incidents requiring work. While it is understood that insurance stipulations/contracts can view community participation as a risk and therefore a deterrent to community involvement in a voluntary capacity for building works, consideration of opportunities for volunteer working bees (eg for landscaping works) should be considered given that this is a well-established mode of operation for dune/bush care type groups in this and other Shires.

Council currently works on a model of facility provision where it is responsible for building development and management while activation is the responsibility of people who wish to hire the venue. Unintentional outcomes from this approach can include the likelihood of:

- under-utilisation of facilities
- new and emerging community needs or activities being overlooked
- long-term users being favoured
- dissatisfaction by communities in the use and availability of facilities

- perceived lack of value for money by the community
- perception that public funds have been wasted and could have been better spent elsewhere.

A more proactive facility management model has been shown to improve usage and equity of access balanced with transparency and effective fiscal management. In this model, there is a closer relationship between the facility managers and the user groups. These venues, if set up with resources such as sound, lighting and internet access can be used for Council's projects/programs thereby actively initiating their use and engaging the community. The facilities and their resources are also available for hire. There are examples elsewhere in NSW where the responsibility for facility management has been placed with the Community Services Section of Council.

The consultants are of the view that program management and venue hire becomes the responsibility of the Community Connections Service Stream alongside its related services such as libraries, facilities bookings officer, customer relations and cultural development on the basis of streamlining and strengthening community development goals with community facility use. In this context, it would be vital to have a clearly defined Service Level Agreement for maintenance of facilities with the relevant Council Services Stream.

Specifically, the facilities to be managed by this team would include:

Durras Hall
 Batemans Bay Community Centre
 Batemans Bay Child and Family Centre
 Batemans Bay library
 Malua Bay Community Centre
 Tomakin Community Centre
 Mechanics Institute Moruya (leased)
 RSL Hall (leased)
 Moruya Library
 Dr MacKay Centre
 Moruya Showground Pavilion
 Tuross Hall
 Bodalla Hall
 Narooma Library, Health Centre and Youth Cafe

This would foster a close dialogue between the users and the facility managers, an opportunity to build relationships with them and an increased capacity to gather information about the activities and users.

The consultants have been advised that the Friends of the Botanic Gardens are investigating the building of a purpose built facility at the gardens for the organisation which would free up the venue currently dedicated to the organisation. Should this proposal eventuate, Council is encouraged to consider compatible uses eg environment education rather than consider this facility for arts activities particularly given its location and lack of profile.

Venue Fees and Charges

Council's pricing policy (2009) supports partial cost recovery in recognition of people's ability to pay and balances an expectation that some services will be cross subsidised from rates for the common good of the community. Non-commercial organisations are charged the partial cost recovery fee (with the exception of the Moruya Showgrounds Pavilion). Charging a fee encourages responsible behaviour towards the facility.

However, the lack of venue hire affordability (particularly for hiring over longer periods eg half-day or evening) and value for money were raised as issues throughout the consultation. Given that many residents are either pensioners, or on fixed income superannuant pensions, that overall income levels are low in the Shire and, that most of the groups are small volunteer based organisations, it is recommended that fees and charges be reviewed to address this issue.

The consultants are of the view that **fees and charges for arts activity are confusing**. In some cases, the rate is set by the type of use e.g. performance, exhibition (group or solo) while some activity e.g. film showing is not categorised. There are issues when applying broad definitions to an arts activity, as they are not always described so literally. Performances are generally charged a higher rate than for other purposes such as classes or workshops. It is also recommended that fees and charges for arts activities be simplified.

Asset Management

The Eurobodalla Council has adopted an *Asset Management Policy* to:

- ensure that Council's assets are managed effectively to deliver the level of service to the community the community is prepared to pay in the short, medium and long term;
- address Council's responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1993 in which Council shall have regards to the long term and cumulative effects of its decisions; and effectively account for and the assets for which it is responsible; and
- minimise risk to Council from public liability.

Council's *Asset Management Policy* states that "*it shall develop formal Asset Management Plans for each of its major infrastructure groups*". The plans will address rationalisation of assets to meet community need, the clustering of asset types to benefit from co-location, consider whole of life costs (including maintenance) and, the need for facility expansions, upgrades or disposal to meet the changing needs of the community. It is understood that Council regards asset management as an important issue and is currently working to introduce a comprehensive Asset Management Plan that will meet the objectives established in the policy.

Council's Asset Management Policy is at Appendix 7.

To assist in the monitoring of Shire assets, a number of databases have been established to record and monitor the condition of individual assets. While public halls are yet to be assessed and included on these databases, this development is an important step in improved asset management for the Shire. It is a priority that these venues now be assessed in recognition of the important social benefits these types of facilities can play for small scattered rural communities.

According to the *Annual Report 2008-09* these Plans will be supplemented by Strategic Plans and priority lists which will identify new assets to be provided and which assets should be upgraded to provide an increased level of service.

This Arts and Cultural Situation Analysis could provide Council with a strategic framework for the community facilities as it recommends the upgrade and clustering and building of those assets that will adequately meet the community need for arts and cultural development.

Asset Condition

Council has made a commitment in the *Management Plan 2009-2014* to:

- Maintain public halls in compliance with relevant regulations and safety standards.
- Develop and maintain community buildings in accord with Plans of Management in consultation with Management Committees.
- Maintain recreation and open space facilities to a standard reflecting their use and utilisation

Council's *Asset Management Policy* also states that "*Council will undertake regular (every four years) condition assessment of its assets to assist in the development of a works program (maintenance program) for each asset*".

It is understood that there is financial pressure being placed on Council to maintain the condition of all of the major assets (roads, parks, drainage) across the Shire. Like these assets and all buildings and structures (toilets, playground equipment, depots, swimming pools), the impact of a minimal maintenance on the community halls is likely to further add to their

deterioration and under-utilisation which may incur higher maintenance costs in the future or, lead to consideration that the asset isn't worth keeping.

It is recommended that condition assessments be made of all community facilities as a matter of priority to provide base information for the new Asset Management Plan.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

2. **THAT** the Community Connections Services Stream has program management and venue hire responsibilities for community facilities to build a productive relationship with the facility users
3. **AND THAT** a clearly defined Service Level Agreement is established within Council for the facilities maintenance program.
4. **THAT** a review of fees and charges for arts use of venues be undertaken to provide equity and simplicity in fee arrangements e.g. develop an hourly and a reduced daily/weekly fee, regardless of the type of arts use.
5. **THAT** a comprehensive register with basic information about each facility be established. The register would include location, size, fees and charges, facility resources (kitchen, cutlery/crockery, tables/chairs), climate control.
6. **THAT** a condition audit report on all public halls be commissioned as a matter of priority to determine a more accurate assessment of the maintenance required appropriate to their intended use.
7. **AND THAT** the condition reports include an assessment of the community facilities that are intended for arts use (both the building and the grounds).
8. **THAT** annual maintenance plans be developed for each facility.

10. Resources (Soft Infrastructure)

Facility Activation

The various Council owned facilities are more than a group of venues and rooms for hire for community, arts and cultural usage. They are the hard infrastructure that supports the development, coordination, facilitation and promotion of arts and cultural activities that contribute to creating a vibrant lifestyle for the residents of the Shire and visitors. While Council has a role in providing venues for hire and use by the many Shire's arts and cultural organisations, that alone does not deliver Council's *Draft Social Plan* Key Directions which is to:

“provide opportunities for the expression and celebration of heritage, arts and culture”; and
“increase participation, support and appreciation of broad spectrum of arts and cultural experiences”

It is therefore important that Council shows leadership in ensuring that these spaces are used, are active and lively. This can be achieved, particularly if facilities are well-maintained and in some instances upgraded, in several ways by Council as follows:

- increasing the demand for space by supporting increased participation in the arts
- increasing and improving access to information regarding Federal, State and Philanthropic funding available to Council and local arts organisations for various arts initiatives, particularly if they take place in rural and regional Australia.
- promoting the availability and suitability of the venues for arts uses to local community organisations ensuring that they are affordable to use. This task can be accomplished through Council's current Arts and Cultural Development Program.
- attracting touring product (theatre, music, and visiting artists) by promoting the venues
- actively managing and programming activities such as the Going Public Program in the Mechanics Institute, library events, organising and curating local exhibitions
- buying in touring visual arts exhibitions and performances.

Funding

Council Funding

Given the population size, socio-economic profile and the nature of urban development within the Shire, its revenue base is relatively small to invest in maintaining and developing community infrastructure. The Council has invested significantly in purpose built sports facilities such as basketball stadia, sports ovals and associated club facilities. These facilities have a significant role to play in supporting the Shire's sporting organisations and the breadth and spread of sporting activity.

The level of investment in the infrastructure that support the arts and cultural aspect of the community is minimal. Anecdotally, the membership of most of the arts and cultural organisations are from the Shire's significant and growing older population. Given the high levels of participation in the arts and the value of such activity to the well being of the community, further investment by Council could be justifiably be argued.

The commitment that Council has made to support arts and cultural infrastructure and the sources of funding it can apply to do this is as follows:

- *Community Development Interest free loans* (\$200,000 pa): Council has made funding available on an application basis to local clubs to provide infrastructure for social and cultural opportunities.
- *Infrastructure Fund* (Capital Works – maintenance and renewal): Council has allocated \$3.1 million pa for asset maintenance & renewal of which \$701,000 per annum will be allocated to “Building, structures & facilities”. In 2009-10 this will be \$626,000 of which \$104,000 (17%) has been allocated specifically to public buildings¹⁸.

¹⁸Eurobodalla Management Plan 2009-2014

- *Community Development Fund (Capital Works – new construction)*: This fund combines a number of sources of income including the Infrastructure Fund, Developer Contributions, General Revenue and Grants. In 2009-10, \$893,000 has been allocated but none of this funding has been directed to public buildings.
- *Developer Contributions*: This funding is sourced from fees collected under Section 94 (S 94) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) for the provision or improvement of amenities or services. Council is anticipating receipt of approximately \$2.68m in Developer Contributions per annum in the forward years. Developer contributions have been allocated to both operational and capital expenditure. Some Councils consult the public on their Developer Contributions Plan which identifies specific projects that will be funded from this source.
- *Donations (09-10)*: In 2009-10, Council has allocated over \$46K in donations which includes \$23 to SEAR and \$13,267 in rate rebates to five arts and cultural organisations.
- *South East Regional Arts Organisation (SEAR)*: Council makes an annual allocation of \$23,000 to SEAR in return for arts services to the Shire. This funding essentially contributes the staff salary and administration of this organisation. SEAR has been able to attract grant funding to the region for a number of initiatives which will benefit the Eurobodalla Shire. In particular these include:
 - touring theatre to schools
 - touring small scale theatre and other productions through the region
 - providing a small grants programs to festivals
 - youth training and skill development
 - Indigenous arts development project.

Council staff are currently negotiating the next service agreement with SEAR. As the Shire is the largest financial contributor of all Councils in the region, Council has the opportunity to clearly identify what share of the products and projects it wants within the Shire, where and when. It should also seek from SEAR, the benefits that this regional organisation should provide ie the development of cross-border partnerships, the creation of a critical mass in the region to attract funding and access to an affordable touring program. It should also be actively involved in developing SEAR's annual program.

Other Government Funding

Anecdotally, it appears that many other regional and rural councils are able to attract substantial external funding to support their arts and cultural activities. While Council has been successful in the past, there are further opportunities which could assist Council in delivering its commitment to arts and cultural development.

Some, not all, are the funding opportunities available to Council.

- *Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government*. The Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program was established as part of the Government's Stimulus Package, available to local government authorities to build and modernise community infrastructure. The Council lodged an application last year to build the Sports and Community Centre at Hanging Rock but was unsuccessful. This report recommends a different solution, and may assist with either the current application (Round 2 was due 15 January 2010) or with a future application if there is to be a further round.
- *Federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts*. The Federal Government states that culturally vibrant regions are vitally important to our national cultural identity. The Department's programs take drama, circus, contemporary music and cultural exhibitions to audiences throughout Australia:

While the various funding programs are well known, access by the far south coast of NSW to this funding has been limited by the quality of available venues. Improvement in the Shire's venues and a concerted effort in making a case for funding to this region will increase the opportunities of successfully receiving funding for touring products from the following programs:

- The Contemporary Music Touring Program: Provides funding support for touring activities to the contemporary music sector. The Program prioritises regional and remote area touring, which may include the movement of artists to, from or around those regions. It aims to increase access to contemporary music for audiences in regional and remote areas. Applications that extend opportunities for communities by including workshops/ master classes and all-ages performances at schools and community venues are welcome.
 - Playing Australia – the national performing arts touring program.
 - Visions Australia – the national visual arts touring program.
 - Contemporary Touring Initiative – the national arts and crafts touring program.
 - Playing Australia—the national performing arts touring program.
 - Festivals Australia.
- *Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.* Provides grants of up to \$5,000 to enable volunteer organisations to purchase practical and tangible small equipment items to assist their volunteers, and/or to contribute towards the reimbursement of fuel costs incurred by volunteers in their volunteering work.
 - *Regional Arts NSW.* Regional Arts Grants are available for arts projects that support sustainable cultural development in partnership with local government and community groups. It particularly provides funding to increase professional development opportunities and increase skills.

The Country Area Support Program provides small grants (up to \$3,000) for arts projects

- *NSW Office of Rural Affairs:* Community Hall Renewal Fund. Grants are available to community-based organisations for repairing and upgrading halls.
- *Arts NSW*
The Ministry operates a number of grant programs available for projects and organisations. Of particular value is the Capital Project funding for the construction, renovation or fitting out of facilities for arts and crafts use. Arts NSW will contribute up to 50% of the \$100,000 (or \$250,000 under exceptional circumstances) available per project.
There will be funding rounds in 2010 for Strategic Project Grants and Program Grants that Council could apply to for funding support of specific programs.

Not all funding sources have been listed. Others are listed in the footer below¹⁹.

Insurance

Community groups often are required to have public liability and volunteer accident insurance for their activities that take place in a public building or place. Until recently, this insurance was very difficult for community groups to obtain and if they were able to, it was very expensive. The insurance market has changed and there are now several providers providing these services. Recently, Council advertised the availability of this insurance. However for some small community organisations, this insurance is still not affordable.

Many local councils have in the past taken out group insurance to cover public liability and volunteer accidents on behalf of identified community organisations. This in-kind assistance is not a high cost to a large organisation like the Eurobodalla Shire, but is invaluable to these small community groups.

¹⁹<http://www.regionalartsnsw.com.au/grants/calendar/calendar.html>

Skill Development

The need for training and development of artists has been identified as a key need. There are currently limited opportunities for arts education in the Shire. High schools offer limited programs. There are several groups that offer workshops using professional and skilled local artists and occasionally by visiting artists but these opportunities are limited and often constrained by inadequate or lack of appropriate facilities.

One of the most economical ways is to attract skilled artists to visit the Shire to hold workshops and master classes is for Council to set up a Visiting Artist in Residence Program. The artist could be offered the Moruya Showground Pavilion as their studio and the cottage could be made available as the residence. In return for the use of these spaces, the artist would be required to offer workshops and master classes, and if appropriate a final performance or exhibition of their work at a venue within the Shire. Funding for this initiative could be sourced on the Regional Arts Fund.

The increased access to professional touring products, such as small-scale exhibitions, music and theatre productions, also exposes the community and arts practitioners to quality experiences and artwork. This can be invaluable in terms of skill development.

The consultant team have spoken with Arts NSW's Visual Arts Program Manager and Parramatta City Council with regard to the development of an Artist in Residency Program, funding and mentoring opportunities.

Arts NSW is keen to see Council develop a funding proposal for an Artist in Residence or Artist Camp proposal which could be funded under its Visual Arts Program either as a Strategic Project Grant or, Program Grant. Parramatta City Council (PCC) arts staff indicated an interest in working with Council's arts staff, providing a mentoring role to support an Artist in Residence Program. This again could be a component of a grant application. Parramatta Council has a well established and highly respected Artist Residency Program and a partnership with the PCC could strengthen Eurobodalla Shire's chances of securing a residency program. The Shoalhaven Arts Board through a grant from Council maintains a data base and provides an up to date what's on information booklet. This could be an alternative option for Council to consider in the future.

Information, Promotion and Coordination

The lack of sufficient information about opportunities to participate in the arts, knowing the activities of individual arts organisations and venues available has been identified as a major issue throughout the consultations.

Given that most of the activities are small scale, take place in low profile venues, and are spread across the Shire, there is a need for a coordinated approach to providing more information to the public. This will also assist in groups being able to better share resources and form alliances.

One of the best ways of providing this information is through the Council's website and by considering supporting the establishment of several peak arts organisations to represent the Shire.

Staffing

Council currently employs a Coordinator Community Cultural Development (21 hours a week) whose major role is:

- promoting exhibitions, film, live performance and music at the Mechanics Institute and the RSL Hall
- coordination of an Artists Network
- working with community groups, community organisations/ service providers, schools and individuals in the development, facilitation, presentation and promotion of a broad range of collaborative ventures. This includes curating and developing exhibitions, support of artist into schools programs, support and training in the preparation of grants/sponsorship and submissions, professional development of arts practitioners and the development of festivals

- providing secretariat support for Council's Public Art Committee and the Arts & Cultural Infrastructure (the Sunset) Committee
- coordinating the biennial Basil Sellers Art Prize
- cultural planning
- developing opportunities for Aboriginal artists to access professional development and exhibition opportunities

For 2009-10, this position is supported with project funding of around \$40,000.

Providing improved information on the opportunities for arts and cultural participation and the facilities available throughout the Shire should be included in the above job description.

The staffing allocation however does not allow for sufficient time to prepare and apply for external funding and to manage the funding/projects when successful. This investment by Council is critical if it is to secure substantial external funding sources to support the development of the Shire's arts infrastructure.

Council also employs a staff member to take bookings for all facilities and to manage the Batemans Bay Community Centre.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

9. **THAT** Council plays an active role in supporting and encouraging organisations to apply for external funding.
10. **THAT** the venues be promoted outside of the Shire to potential arts hirers by Council staff who are responsible for managing Council's arts centres and community facilities.
11. **THAT** Council actively pursue funding to support a range of new arts and cultural initiatives.
12. **THAT** Council actively pursue funding to support touring arts product.
13. **THAT** Council negotiates with SEAR to agree on the products and projects that will be taking place within the Shire, at what venues and when. It is anticipated that this would be in line with Council's expressed vision and goals to be developed in the next cultural plan.
14. **THAT** Council make a provision under its own Public Liability Insurance to support Group Public Liability and Volunteer Accident insurance to support small scale arts and community groups that use Council facilities to provide small scale community events and activities for the Shire communities.
15. **THAT** Council establish a central point of access to information on:
 - arts groups
 - artists
 - venues available for hire (and what type of art form they are most suited to) for each art medium and location
16. **THAT** new, legible signage be developed to be located at the front of each facility clearly identifying it as a Community/Arts Centre or Arts Centre.
17. **THAT** the Coordinator Community Cultural Development position be fulltime (or two part-time positions) to extend the strategic planning as well as community cultural development opportunities through community support for grant application as well as a grant project management role for Council based initiatives.

11. Looking to the Future

This project has undertaken an analysis of the current landscape and situation of the extent and nature of arts and cultural activity in the Shire and the facilities available to support that activity.

The following are the principles and values on which the proposed arts infrastructure plan is based.

1. Arts activities make a substantial contribution to the quality of life and the well-being of the community. Their value and the benefits they confer while not always quantifiable are widely recognised as exceeding the financial cost to a community.
2. Facilities available for arts use must be designed to support, increase and develop participation in arts activities that build on the interests and skills of the Eurobodalla Shire's residents.
3. The selection of location of the facilities is critical to achieve high levels of utilisation and achieve good access by as many of the Shire's residents as practicable.
4. The facilities have a visual profile in their community and are designed to welcome and encourage use.
5. The scale of infrastructure is to reflect Council's resource limitations, the relatively small size of the Shire's population and be affordable.
6. There will be investment in fewer but better facilities.
7. The provision of facilities will be balanced to meet the anticipated level of demand which will ensure reasonable utilisation.
8. Stand-alone facilities are small, multi-dimensional or specific purpose to meet a specific need in the surrounding community.
9. The role and purpose of each facility is clearly defined and promoted.
10. Utilise the infrastructure that already exists in the community.

The hierarchy of facilities proposed to be developed by Council and with the community over the next 15 years is as follows:

- A. **Arts Centres** for Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma
- B. **Small Standalone/ Specific Purpose Facilities** for Tomakin Community & Arts Centre (replaced in the long term by Broulee), Moruya Showground Pavilion (Artist Residency)
- C. **Community Halls** at Nelligen, Durras, Bodalla, Central Tilba

Defining the Hierarchy

The proposed hierarchy is described diagrammatically and then described to provide a rationale for the hierarchy.

Arts Centres

Arts centres are a co-location of several arts and cultural activities that create a focal point of interest in a town. An arts centre assists organisations and individuals to better share ideas, knowledge and information. They foster more efficient management, economies of scale, and encourage higher levels of participation. They can enliven streets, can act as a tourist attractor and contribute to a town's distinctiveness. New buildings can demonstrate excellence in design and can provide landmark statements and contribute to civic pride.

It is proposed that there be three small arts hubs of clustered activity within the Shire. These are to be located in the three major towns of Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma to enable the greatest level of accessibility to residents and that each centre has access to some performance space, spaces for the creation of work and to exhibit visual art work.

It is essential that the exhibitions in all galleries whether they are being used by community hirers, for touring exhibitions or by Council initiated exhibitions, that they be presented to the public in a professional manner. This is of benefit not only to the exhibitors but for the audience to be able to experience the work in the best possible way. It is also important to provide the best the Shire can offer to visitors and tourists.

This model has been recommended as opposed to creating a single hub within the Shire for a number of reasons:

- Each of the towns has different arts and cultural landscapes and needs. This model allows for each hub to respond to these differences and to help to build on their distinctive characters and strengths.
- The often small and intimate nature of the way the arts are practiced in the Shire and the size of the audiences would be compromised by having a single large venue.
- As the consultations indicated, there is an unwillingness of Shire residents to travel the length of the Shire to attend/participate in activity on a regular basis.
- To manage a larger scale regional facility for example, The Q Performing Arts Centre in Queanbeyan with an operating budget for 09-10 of \$715,870.00, would be at considerable cost to Council.
- The cost to hire larger venues will be more expensive for hirers and is anticipated to be unaffordable for most groups.

The scale of the facilities is recommended to be relatively small. This suits the characteristics of small group participation, reinforces the intimate character of much of the arts activity and ensures that access to the venues is affordable.

This model also allows for a gradual, planned and strategic development of infrastructure, commencing with initiatives in each of the towns. This means that the community will start to benefit from affordable investment by the Shire in the short term, rather than waiting many years before there is a sufficient population and rate base to build a large arts centre and for it to be sustained.

This model does not intend to compromise on quality to attract artists to the region. In fact, it will help to create unique destinations and choice for visiting artists, depending on their art form and audience.

Recommendation

It is recommended:

18. **THAT** all gallery spaces owned and managed by Council (there will be two recommended) be professionally curated. This could be done by paid staff or professionally trained volunteers.

Batemans Bay Arts Hub

Option 1: Hanging Rock

The hub could be located at Hanging Rock to adjoin the library, University and the planned new community centre facilities. Council has plans to re-locate the community centre activities and build new facilities for those activities at Hanging Rock. This will include the re-location of the Youth Café.

Advantages:

Being co-located with these other functions, the arts spaces are likely to be used by the library for its exhibitions and activity program, the Youth Café, and the university for its larger lectures as well as by the community centre groups for arts specific activities. Council will also be able to more efficiently manage a facility that is all under 'one roof'.

This is a large parcel of land already owned by Council.

Disadvantages:

The location is not as central to town. The community will lose its profile in town if all community activities are located to a less central location. Due to minimal and overall lack of public transport in the Shire, use of facilities at Hanging Rock requires access by car.

The spaces recommended are as follows:

| | Net Area Estimate (m ²) |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Performance Space:</i> An intimate 150 seat performance space to be developed in partnership with the university to be used as a lecture theatre and music venue (with option for theatre) for touring and local performances. This space will have basic facilities for this function – tiered seating, stage, wings, backstage, acoustics, lighting, sound, and screen for presentations/lectures/films. It is important to build and equip the facility to a basic functional standard to ensure affordability of construction and hire fees (no fly tower). Estimated area includes the stage, auditorium, backstage areas, two dressing rooms with amenities. | 300 |
| Box office | 4 |
| Loading bay and storage area | 40 |
| Bio box and light storage | 8 |
| Dance studio with sprung floor | 100 |
| <i>Visual Arts Spaces:</i> Community gallery | 60 |
| Classroom for use of wet arts (eg clay, paint etc, life drawing) | 50 |
| Classroom for use of dry arts and crafts (eg embroidery, quilting) | 50 |
| Storage | 50 |
| Total Estimated Net Area | 662 (m²) |

Many of the activities currently occurring in the Community Centre could take place in the above spaces.

The spaces then required for the community centre would therefore include:

| | Net Area Estimate (m ²) |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| An Activities Room to be shared between the library and the Youth Café | 100 |
| Two carpeted meeting rooms one of which could be used by the library with internet access and for such groups as the Senior Computer Users Group and U3A. | 50 |
| Foyer area | 60 |
| Kitchen | 10 |
| Centre Manager's Office | 20 |
| Toilets | 20 |
| Total Estimated Net Area | 260 (m²) |

Management and Operational Arrangements

Council's current proposal for Stage One recommends a different space identification and configuration for community and arts space totalling approximately 700 m² (excluding the crèche, café, sports admin offices and gym). The proposal in this report responds to identified need for more community and arts space than is currently provided by the Batemans Bay Community Centre

Council proposes to sell the current site of the Batemans Bay Community Centre and nearby car parking which would make a reasonable Council contribution to the cost.

The Centre is to be Council managed and that the proposed gallery would not be operated commercially. It is unrealistic to expect that a community or regional gallery will be commercially viable. The consultants are of the view that the rental return predicted in the proposed submission to the Federal Government is unrealistic. However if the facility is run and managed efficiently by the library and or by a not-for-profit organisation, then Council could see this as an investment in the community rather than an unviable profit-making proposition. One of the most important aspects is that for all exhibitions whether they be the library's, schools, community organisations or touring product, is that the hanging of the exhibition be professional curated to present the work in the best possible way.

Implementation for Option 1

- With development of the Batemans Bay Arts Centre as part of the Batemans Bay Community Centre, that the Centre Coordinator position is increased from part time to full time.
- That the above development be considered for inclusion in Stage One of the proposed Batemans Bay Regional Community and Sports Centre development at Hanging Rock to accommodate the community and arts activities (estimated total 992 m²).
- In addition, a further contribution from the University of Wollongong be sought for the lecture theatre/performance space.
- Council should seek funding from the Federal Government's Infrastructure Fund for Stage 1.

Option 2: Town Centre

An alternative option is to upgrade, modify and expand the Batemans Bay Community Centre on its current site to better respond to demand for community space for hire and purpose built arts facilities. The development could extend over the current car park and incorporate the Batemans Bay Museum into a cultural hub. The hub would be a highly visible and striking focal point/bookend to the street. Currently the street operates as a dead end, but it will be further activated with the addition of the new Centrelink offices. Adult Education, which is in the same area, is also set to expand its workshop/training facilities to expand the availability of arts and other courses which would contribute to the area developing as a hub for the arts and community.

The beautifully landscaped wetlands with boardwalks to the rear of the community centre has the potential to be part of performance programming if the centre was adapted for use as a community and arts facility.

Advantages:

- Council is building on and using a current asset which is in reasonably good condition.
- The facility is central to the town which offers other amenities and convenience for users including car parking.
- A new building used for arts purposes (such as performance or gallery) could make a strong physical statement representing the creative aspects of the Shire to the local community and tourists.
- An arts hub could contribute to the liveliness and dimensions of this street and help to build a connection between Museum Place and the waterfront.
- An upgrade of the building could improve access to the water gardens, which are currently hidden from view, and increase the visitation to the Batemans Bay Museum.

Disadvantages

- The sale of the Community Centre land could not be used to contribute to the cost of new buildings or upgrades proposed at Hanging Rock.
- There may be space and car parking area limitations.
- The co-location advantages with the library and University are not realised.
- The youth café, if not relocated to Hanging Rock, loses its advantages of accessing outdoor activity space.

The spaces recommended are as follows:

| | Net Area Estimate (m ²) |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <p><i>A new Performance Space on the car park in between the Community Centre and the Museum:</i> An intimate 150 seat performance space to be used as a lecture theatre and music venue (and theatre) for touring and local performances. This space will have basic facilities for this function – tiered seating, stage, wings, backstage, acoustics, lighting, sound, and screen for presentations/lectures/films. It is important to build and equip the facility to a basic functional standard to ensure affordability of construction and hire fees. (no fly tower).</p> <p>Estimated area includes the stage, auditorium, backstage areas, two dressing rooms with amenities.</p> <p>Box office Loading bay and storage area Bio box and light storage</p> | <p>300</p> <p>4 40 8</p> |
| <p><i>Visual Arts Spaces:</i> A Community Gallery on the car park and opening up to the Water Gardens</p> <p>A new workshop (for wet arts) at the rear of the building opening to the Water Gardens</p> <p>New storage</p> <p>Internet access be provided to the one of the current community centre activity rooms</p> | <p>60</p> <p>50</p> <p>50</p> |
| Total Estimated Additional Net Area | 512m² |

Implementation

The above development could be staged. It could also attract the funding from the Federal Government's Infrastructure Fund and from Arts NSW Capital Grants Program.

If a new gallery is to be provided in Batemans Bay, it is desirable that the Land of Many Waters Gallery be converted to a high quality retail outlet (not a gallery) selling artworks selected for their quality and diversity on commission. A curator should be engaged to select the work from local professional artists and to display the work professionally.

The Batemans Bay Community Centre is one of the most heavily booked community facilities within the Shire. This is probably due to factors including central location, a staff member located in the building (on a part time basis), the building is relatively new and maintained and, a greater demand generated from a higher population. Consideration of the recommendation relating to an arts centre being established in Batemans Bay is an immediate priority arising from this study.

Recommendations:

It is recommended:

19. **THAT** Council consider Options 1 (Hanging Rock) or 2 (Town Centre – expanded Community Centre) for the establishment of a small arts hub in Batemans Bay for:
 - community gallery
 - performance space (for around 150 seats) for music and theatre
 - space suitable for dance workshops
 - art/craft studios suitable for dry and wet work
 - storage
20. **THAT** the Land of Many Waters Gallery be converted to a retail outlet selling artwork on commission utilising the services of a curator to select the works for sale.

Moruya Arts Centre

Due to a number of factors, the Page Street/Queen Street Moruya has the potential to be reinforced as the small Arts Hub for Moruya. Some of the factors are noted below.

The Mechanics Institute with its acoustically suitable design has a history of being a small cultural centre within the Shire. Council has upgraded the hall to enable it to be used for exhibitions – both those that are programmed by Council (Going Public Program) and those that are presented by groups of artists who hire the space. The Moruya Film Club also hires the space for films, however it is not entirely appropriate for this use.

The RSL Hall is used for performances (albeit limited in number). The adjacent Anglican Church Hall is used for choir rehearsals. Around the corner in Queen St, the Gudhuga Aboriginal Corporation is transforming into a cultural and language centre with a small gallery, workshop space and traditional language centre. Also in Queen Street, St Mary’s Primary School Hall will become available as a new venue for hire when completed.

The Council has recognised the value of the Mechanics Institute and the RSL Hall by ensuring their continuity by committing to a long term (20 year lease) with the current owner, RSL NSW. As part of this lease, Council is responsible for all maintenance. Council has agreed to build, at its cost, an expanded meeting room for the RSL in the hall.

The following outlines a proposal for use of the Mechanics Institute and the RSL Hall for arts purposes.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Performance space | <p>Retain the structural elements of the RSL Hall.</p> <p>Re-build the hall into a acoustically treated performance space with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stage - backstage - wings - dressing rooms <p>Toilet block be demolished and new contemporary toilet amenities with disabled access built at the rear.</p> <p>A new foyer be built joining the RSL Hall to the Mechanics Institute and a new side entrance to the RSL Hall be created.</p> <p>Install retractable seating (about 150 seats), with basic sound, lighting equipment, and screen for film showings.</p> <p>Retain the RSL street presence and build an enlarged meeting room for the RSL.</p> <p>Build a new small kitchen (not a commercial kitchen) for use by the Arts Centre.</p> |
| Visual Arts Space | <p>Construct a wet art/craft workshop space and a dry art/craft workshop space at the rear of the adjacent Dr McKay Centre. This could be used by the Centre’s active living programs as well as by arts groups.</p> <p>Convert the Mechanic’s Institute kitchen to a storage space</p> |

Although there are other properties for sale in Page and Queen Street, all of which could be purchased by Council for arts use, Council is advised to build on what already exists and what they have already invested in.

Funding to undertake the capital improvements and additional buildings could be sought from State (Arts NSW) and Federal Government funding over time.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

21. **THAT** Council negotiate with NSW RSL to purchase of the Mechanics Institute and the RSL Hall (from Council's Capital Works Program - Infrastructure Fund) in order to create the Moruya Arts Centre.
22. **AND THAT** if purchased, Council invest in their proper maintenance, upgrade and expansion for:
 - community gallery in the Mechanics Institute
 - performance space suitable for theatre, music and film in the RSL Hall
 - space suitable for dance workshops
 - two art/craft studios
 - storage
23. **THAT** Council not spend any further maintenance funding or consider allocating any substantial money to properties that it does not own.
24. **AND THAT** the Community Connectivity Service Stream manage the arts centre.

If the Council were to actively work to develop and attract programs and increase use of the space, additional staff may be required. If the hall were to attract regular out-of-Shire users such as Milton Theatre does with its highly respected music program, then the income from the hire could be used to reimburse staffing or maintenance costs.

Narooma Arts Centre

Narooma is poised to further establish and develop its arts and craft with an arts hub developed to reinforce the type and nature of arts activity that is currently taking place within Narooma and the resources within the community. The logical place to create this hub is in the centre of Narooma on the land owned by School of Arts.

Already there is a strong arts and crafts practice through the Montague Arts and Crafts Society which operates out of the cottage on the site. The building includes a small retail space and meeting room which is used unsatisfactorily for workshops.

The Kinema continues to grow in popularity. It has two cinema theatres – one for showing popular and one for art house films (about 200 seats) and the smaller for live streaming of international opera and theatre performances (about 30 seats). This small venue has character and charm and feels very welcoming.

Although the site is challenging because of its sloping contours it potentially offers an excellent location and profile to an arts centre with a retail outlet (leased until 2011) and the cinema both having an accessible active street frontage. Rear access to the property can also be gained from the flat land below.

There is capacity on the property to build additional facilities to support the current and future needs for arts practice and development within Narooma.

The cinema itself, given its scale and design, offers potential to include a performing arts facility as part of the complex. It has a good-sized auditorium and with modifications, it could be made suitable as a music (particularly for choral concerts) and performance space. The current lessee and the School of Arts are very supportive of this expanded role.

With support from Council, Narooma School of Arts is encouraged to consider the following upgrades / additions to their site to create an arts centre.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Performance space | Modify the cinema: Additional acoustic treatment Modify the stage and music system Build additional toilets and dressing room space |
| Visual Arts Space | Construct a wet art/craft workshop space and a dry art/craft workshop space on the lower part of the site. Build a storage facility Convert the cottage into a community gallery, to which good road access be provided (by the Lands Department – Crown Land) |

Implementation

One of the first steps in developing this physically challenging site is to prepare a master plan.

The Kinema is a commercial business which leases the cinema building from the Narooma School of Arts. Revenue obtained from rental is used to maintain the building. The business owners have themselves invested in making building and projection improvements. It is unreasonable to expect the lessees to further invest in a facility which they do not own. Nor should Council invest in this facility.

The Council leases the cottage (approximately \$6,500 annually) for use by the Montague Arts and Crafts Society.

Recommendations

Its is recommended:

25. THAT Council work in partnership with the Narooma School of Arts to develop a master plan to include draft sketch plans and cost estimate by an independent and qualified designer.
26. **THAT** Council assist the Narooma School of Arts with an application to Arts NSW under its Capital Project Funding for up to \$100,000 (or \$250,000 if exceptional) to create the Narooma Arts Centre (this would be 50 per cent of the cost of the capital project) to include:
 - a modification of the cinema to accommodate music and theatre performance
 - workshop spaces for wet and dry art/craft
 - storage
 - modification of the cottage to accommodate a community gallery.
27. **THAT** the School of Arts request a further interest free loan from Council (the School has a good track record of repaying these loans and currently has a loan with Council for the construction of the disabled toilet) to achieve the other 50%.
28. **THAT** Council cease paying for the leasing arrangement on behalf of the Montague Arts and Crafts Society and convert this funding to a block capital grant.
29. **AND THAT** these options be discussed with the Narooma School of Arts.
30. **AND THAT** Council support the School of Arts in attracting philanthropic funding for this capital work.

Small Stand Alone Visual Arts Facilities

The following facilities should be developed to assist the making and development of the arts and crafts in the Shire as there is significant participation and need for such facilities.

Tomakin Community and Arts Centre

Tomakin Community Centre currently offers a comfortable meeting /activities room half way between Moruya and Batemans Bay. It is located in a prominent position on George Bass Drive, the major coastal road. It is therefore located conveniently and centrally to the southern suburbs of Batemans Bay and the coastal towns of Lilli Pilly Rosedale, Mossy Point, and Broulee.

There is sufficient land at the rear of the building to build a wet workshop room onto the existing building to contribute to meeting the need for this type of space in the northern end of the Shire. While a fundraising organisation uses the open space for its garage sales the new addition could be made available for this organisation to use on these days.

Signage to promote this building as an active Arts and Community Centre would help to improve its image, availability and prominence.

In the long term however, as development expands around the Captain Oldrey Park at Broulee, and the connector road is built between Captain Oldrey Park and George Bass Drive, the investment in art workshop spaces for wet and dry crafts may be appropriate at the Captain Oldrey Hall in Broulee as an alternative to Tomakin. For this to be appropriate however, the site would need to be visible and highly accessible from Coronation Drive with good access and a demonstrable increase in use and demand of the venue.

Recommendation

It is recommended:

31. **THAT** Council allocate Infrastructure Funding to the construction of the workshop space for wet crafts at the Tomakin Community Centre.
32. **THAT** in the longer term, as an alternative to Tomakin, when Broulee has substantially developed around Captain Oldrey Park that consideration is given to the construction of wet and dry craft workshop spaces at the Captain Oldrey Hall.

Moruya Community and Arts Showgrounds Pavilion

This facility, which the Council has already upgraded to preserve its heritage character, is currently under-utilised. It is ideally suited with some minor modifications, for an Artist in Residence Program. The visiting artists could be offered the Pavilion and the meeting room as their studio space in return for offering a series of workshops and master classes. The addition of a sink/brush/clay wash up area and a grease trap would be required. Other minor equipment such as trestles and chairs, internet connection and other minor equipment supplies would be needed.

The nearby cottage which Council has already agreed to upgrade could be offered as free accommodation to the artist during their stay.

The facility would have appeal to visiting artists because of its history, its quiet location, good access to town, its location within the Showground and the types of uses this attracts and of course, it is on the south coast of NSW. The building modification could be sought from Council's Infrastructure Fund and from Arts NSW's capital fund.

Having the cottage occupied through an Artist Residency Program would improve passive surveillance and activation of the site in a proactive, developmental way with sustained benefits for the arts community. It is understood there has been consideration of a caretaker for the site. There are some long-term issues with long-term caretaker arrangements. The Artist Residency Program could achieve the same objective whilst not creating future legal and management issues with caretaker arrangements. Artist residency arrangements should be organised by Council.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

33. **THAT** Council negotiate with the Moruya Showground Committee and support the establishment of an Artist Residency Program based on use of the Showground Pavilion and the adjacent cottage.
34. **AND THAT** Council through the Coordinator Community Cultural Development investigate and report to Council on the opportunities to form a partnership with Parramatta City Council to support the Artist in Residency Program including applying for grants to support this initiative.

Community Halls

Country halls have been the centrepiece of many rural towns and villages and are used frequently for social events and community celebrations. They hold memories of good times and still have an important role to play in the Shire's small communities where access to a community space is limited. The community halls in the Shire were generally built around the late 1940's and apart from general upkeep, they are pretty much in original condition. Due to their location, the halls offer good access which creates potential for increased use.

The following community halls are recommended for maintenance/upgrade as they do and will perform an important role in their local communities.

Bodalla Community Hall

As Bodalla is undergoing 'culture change' there is an opportunity to engage the spirit and civic pride of the Bodalla community and work with them to reclaim this hall. Given its prime location on the Princes Highway and being half way between Moruya and Narooma, the hall is accessible not only to Bodalla and its surrounds, but also the communities from Moruya through to Narooma.

The hall is in a satisfactory condition and could be upgraded to provide comfort, safety, and improved functionality. This could include small scale but vital works to rebuild, renew and refresh this important community facility. The facility would then be suitable for touring theatre and music performances. The toilets located with the building are used as public amenities and are open during the day for public use. There is considerable interest by some community members in reactivating the Bodalla Hall. There would be an opportunity for Council to work with the local community to identify a discrete, achievable project that could be the subject of a community led funding application to the Community Hall Renewal Fund eg landscaping, signage that would contribute to other maintenance works required to contribute to the rejuvenation of the hall for arts, and community purposes.

Durras Community Hall

The hall while small has generally been well maintained by the community and should be preserved for the Durras community as it is the only community space available to this reasonably isolated community.

Recommendation

It is recommended:

35. **THAT** if Council is successful in its application to the NSW Office of Rural Affairs Community Hall Renewal Fund for the upgrade of Bodalla and Durras Halls, that it work in partnership with the Bodalla and Durras communities in the delivery of these projects.

Nelligen and Central Tilba Community Halls

Although Council does not own nor is responsible for these facilities, Council can support these communities to retain and maintain their halls for community and arts uses.

Recommendation:

It is recommended:

36. **THAT** Council encourage and work with the Nelligen and Central Tilba communities to apply for the Community Hall Renewal Fund to ensure that these community halls can continue to provide important community gathering and meeting spaces.

Timeframe

Table 2: Timeframe

| | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Batemans Bay Arts Centre | | | | | |
| Option 1: Hanging Rock | | | | | |
| Seek Funding from Regional & Local Community Infrastructure Program by Dec 2010 | ■ | ■ | | | |
| Sell Community Centre | | ■ | | | |
| Design and Construct | | | ■ | ■ | |
| Option 2: Batemans Bay Town Centre | | | | | |
| Seek funding from Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program | ■ | ■ | | | |
| Design, upgrade existing community centre & construct new | | | ■ | ■ | |
| Moruya Arts Centre | | | | | |
| Purchase Mechanics Institute & RSL Hall | | ■ | | | |
| Seek Arts NSW and other Government funding | | | ■ | ■ | |
| Design & construct | | | | ■ | ■ |
| Narooma Arts Centre | | | | | |
| Master Plan | ■ | | | | |
| Seek Funding from Arts NSW by June 2010 | ■ | | | | |
| Design and construct | | ■ | ■ | | |
| Tomakin Community & Arts Centre | | | | | |
| Construct (Council's Infrastructure Fund) | | | | | ■ |
| Moruya Showgrounds Community & Arts Pavilion | | | | | |
| Upgrade cottage & minor modification to Pavilion | | ■ | | | |
| Apply for Artists in Residence Funding from Arts NSW by Aug 2010 | | ■ | | | |
| Implement Program | | | ■ | | |
| Durras Hall | | | | | |
| Apply to Office of Rural Affairs – Community Hall Fund | | ■ | | | |
| Minor upgrade | | | ■ | | |
| Bodalla Hall | | | | | |
| Apply to Office of Rural Affairs – Community Hall Fund by ASAP | ■ | | | | |
| Major upgrade of hall | | ■ | | | |
| Staffing | | | | | |
| Upgrade staff from 0.6 to 1 full ASL | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |