

Submission
No 65

INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND
CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE OUTSIDE THE SYDNEY
CBD

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DB (F2008/00448)
(Contact Officer: David Briant - 9399.0994)

4 September 2008

Mr David Borger MP
Chairman
Public Works Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr David Briant,

Inquiry into the development of arts and cultural infrastructure outside the Sydney CBD – submission by Randwick City Council

Randwick City Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the development of arts and cultural infrastructure outside the Sydney CBD. Being the oldest municipality in NSW, Randwick City has a rich artistic and cultural heritage, and today the City continues to have a strong artistic, cultural, educational and recreation focus. Located within the Council area are a number of regionally significant arts and cultural facilities such as the La Perouse Museum, National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) and the Randwick Ritz cinema which is the only item in the metropolitan area listed on the State Heritage Register. Randwick City is also home to a vibrant creative community with a broad cross section of established arts and cultural practitioners. This includes musicians, film makers, painters, sculptors, actors, performers, writers and composers.

The population of Randwick is comprised of people from different cultural backgrounds. Over one third of our residents were born overseas, coming from over 100 countries and speaking over 60 different languages. Each year Council celebrates its cultural diversity by holding community a wide range of cultural activities and events. Such events contribute to making Randwick City a vibrant and culturally enriched community. Council consults with the Randwick City Council Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee (MAC) on multicultural issues and on how to improve access to services, activities and events for people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background. In addition, the Randwick area has a rich Aboriginal heritage. Today, La Perouse and Little Bay are home to two of the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within Randwick City and the surrounding districts.

Council would like to make the following points in relation to the terms of the reference for the inquiry and in general:

- **Any relevant Council's arts and cultural planning or strategies**

In June 2008, Council adopted its inaugural Cultural Plan - *A Cultural Randwick City*. The Plan was prepared to provide Council with a strategic framework for guiding our City's cultural activities over a ten year period and to enhance funding

opportunities for cultural development. Although Council has a long involvement in planning and hosting a range of cultural activities, *A Cultural Randwick City* will ensure that these activities are addressed within a strategic framework to deliver events including a public arts and performing arts program.

A Cultural Randwick City is based on extensive community and in-house consultations and was also developed in accordance with the Arts NSW Cultural Planning Guidelines (2004). Some of the key actions within the Plan include:

- Establish a Cultural Advisory Panel to guide our public art initiatives
- Develop a strategic partnerships with major cultural institutions in the area to facilitate greater sharing of knowledge and facilities
- Develop a Public Art Policy and Masterplan to guide enhancement of our City's public domain
- Implement a more prominent performance and visual arts program within our City
- Recognise and preserve our Indigenous and European heritage assets
- Prepare an Events Strategy to continue and enhance our current events program

A copy of *A Cultural Randwick City* has been included as an attachment to this submission.

Council has recently commenced preparation of a Public Art Policy and Masterplan that will guide enhancement of areas in the public domain. The policy will describe Council's public art objectives and outline a best practice implementation process for our public art projects. The public art policy and Masterplan is scheduled for completion in early 2009.

Please note that a community cultural facility is being built as part of the Prince Henry residential precinct at Little Bay for dedication to Randwick City Council in 2009. The Centre is being constructed for Council as one of a number of works in lieu of Section 94 contributions. The establishment cost of the Centre is estimated at \$5.2 million. An auditorium with staging facilities and a seating capacity for 250 people will be provided as part of this development. When completed, we will then have a quality venue for Council to stage a range of performing and visual arts events.

In addition, as part of a staged development application process involving the construction of 82 dwellings at Kensington (on a site adjacent to the Royal Randwick Racecourse) the developer has entered into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Council to build a facility designed to be used as artist studios. This facility will have a range of activity spaces and artist accommodation. The studios will have a strong community interface via a range of arts based events, workshops, talks and public exhibitions.

• **Council's experience with the State grants process**

Council has extensive experience in applying for grants available from State government agencies in areas such as Community Development and Library Services. However, Council has limited experience in seeking cultural grants from Arts NSW or similar government agencies. Council has not applied for any cultural grants funding from Arts NSW mainly because it has not had in place an endorsed Cultural Plan nor appropriate venues to hold cultural and artistic events. However, this situation is due to change from 2009 onwards on completion of cultural facility in Little Bay.

- **The amount of funding spent on arts and cultural activities**

Council currently allocates approximately \$400,000 for cultural events and activities within its annual budget. Some of the key activities and events funded under this budget include:

- Australia Day
- Coogee Christmas Carols
- New Year's Eve Fireworks
- The Spot Film and Food Festival
- Lionel Bowen Young Writers Award
- Eco Living Fair/ Harmony Day

Council also provides financial contributions for the following community initiated cultural activities such as the Coogee Arts Festival, NAIDCO Week and Maroubra Art Show. There is constant pressure from local organisations to provide financial or in-kind support to hold locally initiated events.

As you can see, the events budget of \$400,000 is modest and there is limited scope to increase this amount because the Council already devotes a significant proportion of its operating budget to maintaining its beach facilities and similar outdoor public spaces where many of its community events are held for the benefit of the broader Sydney population.

The local community would benefit greatly from financial assistance from agencies such as Arts NSW to fund a range of artistic and performing arts programs to enrich our own City's cultural life. Having a local cultural program without having to travel to the City of Sydney will greatly benefit our less mobile and ageing residents.

- **Whether council has a full time arts or cultural officer or dedicated staffing**

A community project officer, on a part time basis, is responsible for developing cultural projects. Council's Community Planning staff has additional responsibility in preparing strategic documents and policies such as Council's Cultural Plan, Public Art Policy and Masterplan. Council's Senior Social Planner dedicates approximately two days per week (14 hours) on cultural planning matters. Council's Community Project Officers, including two dedicated Events Officers, are also heavily involved in organising a range of cultural activities and community events held annually.

- **The significance of any partnerships with private sector funding or private sector sponsorships in the area of arts and culture**

Council receives small amounts of corporate sponsorship from local businesses and organisations to support some of its major events and activities. Sponsorship is usually in the form of small donations, prizes, advertising or in kind support. Unless Council is able to commit additional resources to employing a dedicated arts/ cultural officer, its ability to cultivate and attract major sponsorship, particularly from the private sector, to deliver successful outcomes is limited.

- **Any issues related to the implementation of the arts/cultural grants program or with the implementation of the arts and cultural strategic plan.**

As explained earlier in our submission, Council has limited involvement in applying for cultural grants program from the Arts NSW and as such is not in a position to comment on the process. However, perhaps the inquiry may consider it appropriate that a special local council category of arts grants be set aside in the future for arts and cultural projects aimed at the grass roots level.

- **Conclusion**

Our community has raised a range of issues and opportunities in relation to the City's artistic, cultural, leisure and recreation needs. Some of the major issues including the need for a greater number of cultural facilities, especially for young people, and for a greater number of public artworks and cultural events are currently being addressed. However, the one barrier that is limiting Council's ability to introduce a more prominent performance and visual arts program within the City is the lack of readily accessible funding from Arts NSW to encourage creative artistic and cultural expression across our City.

If you would like to speak with a Council officer about this submission, please call David Briant, Senior Social Planner, on 9399 0994 or Avril Jeans, Community Project officer, on 9399 0823.

Yours faithfully,



Ray Brownlee
General Manager