

Submission
No 64

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

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The Committee Manager
Public Works Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into the Development of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Outside the Sydney CBD

I refer to the NSW Public Works Committee proposed examination and inquiry into the development of arts and cultural infrastructure outside of the Sydney CBD. Bathurst Regional Council has a strong commitment to the arts and cultural scene, recognising that these services, programs and facilities are an essential component of a healthy community lifestyle.

Council believes it is essential that an arts and cultural plan for NSW be developed, as the current State Plan devotes minimal space and strategy to this essential part of our communities, both within and outside the Sydney CBD.

Please find below Council's submission in relation to the inquiry:

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<p>Issues of public and private funding and allocation of resources;</p>	<p>The financial cost of developing high quality arts facilities in regional centres is very high. To achieve the best outcomes for the community, it is desirable that all levels of government work together to fund these projects.</p> <p>While private funding is also desirable the needs of private developers, (mostly commercial drivers) should not be allowed to limit the scope or scale of facilities and the access of artists to them. For example, it may seem beneficial to have a developer include at their cost, an arts facility for public benefit in a large commercial development but this can often lead to a compromised result which hinders the development of appropriate cultural facilities for the community.</p> <p>The cost of building cultural facilities in regional areas is more expensive than in the larger cities because of isolation and the cost of maintenance in areas such as state of the art climate control can be difficult to service in the smaller regional centres.</p> <p>Regional centres do not have access to the level of</p>

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	<p>philanthropy which exists in the major cities which makes the issues of fundraising for such facilities much more difficult to achieve.</p> <p>Businesses with the potential to support large scale cultural capital development are not as attuned to funding for the arts as they are to supporting sports, education and social issues.</p> <p>Some State Government functions are passed on to public libraries without accompanying funding, the RTA drivers' license Information and practice tests being one example. These require public access computers at Libraries, which Local Government then provides. It is important to note in any discussion regarding the possibility of private funding that this should not be at the risk of losing State funding for the cultural services and infrastructure.</p>
<p>Suitability of public infrastructure for arts and cultural life;</p>	<p>Many cultural facilities have been built without adequate consultation of appropriate artists, technicians and other relevant arts industry workers. Inevitably this leads to additional costs as mistakes made are remedied over time. Fixing these problems takes resources away from maintenance and upgrades.</p> <p>The benchmarking of facilities is also important. In the performing arts this helps to make the touring of work viable and assists with the development of industry standards to ensure quality and safety. Benchmarking does not necessarily mean that facilities should be cloned; they can still be individual but have minimum standards.</p> <p>Performing arts facilities in regional centres should ideally cater for touring work as well as local work and the requirements in many instances may differ from one to the other.</p> <p>There are key industry organisations that should be consulted when considering the development of new performing arts facilities, galleries and museums in regional centres. For example, for entertainment centres, the National body is the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association (APACA). In NSW the State body is the Incorporation of NSW and ACT Performing Arts Centres (INAPAC). The Victorian body (VAPAC) has developed a very useful benchmarking document which should be used as a basis when considering the development of new venues. Museums and Galleries peak body mgNSW assists in advice regarding the planning, development and management of Museums and Galleries.</p>

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	<p>The approach to the building of cultural facilities in regional areas is still very much driven by local "experts". The idea that everyone is an expert still flourishes in regional areas. Sometimes this is driven by financial needs.</p> <p>Local Government infrastructure is the most appropriate level for developing arts and culture in rural and regional NSW. Local Art Galleries, Museums and Libraries are able to respond to Local needs and provide a cultural framework that is relevant to local people. However, local does not infer second rate, rather flexibility and a reflection of local community needs.</p> <p>Regional cultural facilities provide a necessary equality for non metropolitan areas, proving cultural access is important for the health of any community and to attract new members to live in the community</p> <p>Perhaps, seeing that Local Government currently contributes so much financial input into the building of cultural Infrastructure, it should be explored that State Government should contribute more maintenance \$'s to Regional Cultural facilities.</p>
<p>The desirability of locating cultural facilities in close proximity to create hubs;</p>	<p>This is desirable but details will vary depending upon location. A Performing Arts Centre that is not in the Centre of a town is a tautology.</p> <p>Cultural hubs within a regional town provide ease of access. However a really top grade cultural facility can become a destination in itself eg Louisiana Modern Art Museum in Humlabæck Denmark, Krøller-Müller Museum in a park near Otteloo Netherlands exist in isolated areas but because of the quality of the museum experience draw large audiences.</p> <p>Cultural hubs allow for a sharing of scarce cultural facilities eg educational and technical facilities as well as adequate storage facilities. However, each local situation needs to be allowed to find a local solution. Hubs may be the way, but in many cases local shopping patterns, parking, building space availability and the desirability of separating some functions to encourage access, specific to need should be allowed to be the main factors in location.</p> <p>And in some communities, the fact that a small community arts space exists OUTSIDE the central part of the town can result in a strengthening of cultural development because of it's ability to address issues very close to the community through a</p>

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	<p>cultural framework.</p> <p>Cultural Hubs also allow for interesting audience development projects to be created as a consequence of the cross flow of volunteers and audiences.</p>
<p>Accessibility of cultural and arts education;</p>	<p>The link between education and the arts is vital. All levels of government should foster these links. Public community debate about arts and culture is also vital and arts centres should be focus points for this debate. This again is essential for equity with Metropolitan communities</p> <p>The connection between cultural facilities and arts education is critical and must be achieved at all levels of education - kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary.</p> <p>The provision of free or very low cost access to cultural facilities and educational programs including free transport means there is a parity across all educational institutions from private to isolated and small public schools</p> <p>When considering infrastructure in Regional centres, it is essential to include community arts and education facilities which provide less formal opportunities for accessing cultural and arts education</p>
<p>Economic impacts on communities;</p>	<p>Economic impacts have never been adequately measured and it is therefore likely that impacts have been significantly underestimated. Bodies such as APACA, INAPAC, Regional Arts bodies should be assisted by government in their efforts to capture relevant data on an ongoing basis. Economic impacts such as lifestyle enhancement for a community also need to be taken into account.</p> <p>Economic impacts are important but the social impact of the arts on a regional area is of more importance. Any economic benefit only provides additional benefits. It is interesting to observe that the need for the arts to set out their economic benefits to the community is given, however it is never asked of the role sports play in regional community which is based on participation rates.</p> <p>Local cultural facilities have the potential to increase or attract economic activity; State funding should be provided to allow for us to participate within the context of new retail developments. A regional Museum or Library within Westfield would be the way forward</p>

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<p>The adequacy of the NSW State Plan and desirability of a cultural plan for the state to maximise diversity of access, with reference to the Tourism Masterplan and other relevant planning strategies.</p>	<p>The State Plan appears to contain scant reference to the arts and a cultural plan would help to flesh this out. The main reference is to participation but differentiation between participation as an artist or as an appreciator of the arts is not made. Any State Cultural Plan should take Local Government Cultural Plans into consideration and should work towards a complimentary strategy.</p> <p>A clearly defined cultural plan would allow artists, arts organisation and the managers of arts facilities a clearer sense of where they stand in terms of access to State Government assistance. It would allow discussion, debate and dialogue which might allow a more strategic development of facilities and services.</p> <p>The State Plan in relation to the arts confines itself almost exclusively to raising participation rates and the recognition of multicultural arts practice.</p> <p>A State Cultural Regional Plan like the Western Sydney Plan which has poured substantial funding into the Western Districts of Sydney could be a step in the right direction.</p>
<p>Any other relevant matters.</p> <p>7.1 Staffing</p> <p>7.2 Arts/Cultural Officer</p> <p>7.3 Partnerships with the private Sector</p>	<p>NSW Public Works should work closely with Arts NSW on the development of this inquiry</p> <p>Bathurst Regional Council has 6 Cultural facilities, each with the minimum dedicated staff, as well as some casuals and volunteers. Staffing is at the bare minimum which enables each of the facilities to be open 7 days per week. Staffing cannot increase whilst rates pegging occurs and State grants decrease.</p> <p>Bathurst Regional Council does not have a dedicated Cultural Officer, but contributes \$22,000/annum to the Regional Arts Development Officer program. Whilst this is an important contribution from a Regional perspective (Bathurst is the largest Council in the ArtsOutwest portfolio) it means that there are no spare \$'s to employ someone to drive Cultural Development specifically in Bathurst. The position is consumed by the needs of the many small Councils in the portfolio.</p> <p>Bathurst Councils cultural facilities have sought sponsorship from the private sector in Bathurst, and have been successful in this with a number of community minded businesses in town. However, as economic conditions deteriorate and more</p>

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	organizations seek extra funds, the \$'s available are shrinking.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on the telephone number below.

Yours faithfully



L Atkinson
DIRECTOR
CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES