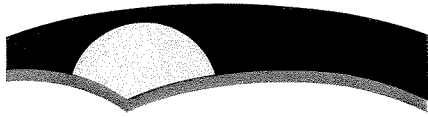


Submission
No 13

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

Organisation: Cootamundra Shire Council
Name: Mr David Hume
Position: Director Corporate Services
Telephone: 02 6940 2100
Date Received: 27/08/2008



Cootamundra Shire Council

ABN 47 475 920 639
Wallendoon Street
PO Box 420
Cootamundra NSW 2590
Phone 02 6940 2100
Fax 02 6940 2127
Email mail@cootamundra.nsw.gov.au
Web www.cootamundra.local-e.nsw.gov.au



06.03.001

D Hume

26 August, 2008

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

RECEIVED
27/08/08

Dear Manager

RE: Inquiry into the Development of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Inquiry into the Development of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Outside the Sydney CBD. Cootamundra Shire Council would like to provide the following response.

Cootamundra is a country town that has committed considerable time, effort, resources and financial support to the development of the visual and performing arts. The Cootamundra Amateur Dramatic Arts Society (CADAS) has been operating for 60 years and caters for both adults and children. This society has conducted numerous musicals, melodrama, comedy and drama performances over the years and has been recognised through the Canberra Area Theatre Awards.

Cootamundra also annually conducts the Wattle Time Art Exhibition where artists throughout the region, state and nation display their works, with some artists making their works available for purchase. These works are judged in various categories with a variety of Acquisitive Awards being offered including the Cootamundra Shire Acquisitive Award. There is total prize money of \$10,000 being offered. To date Council has added more than 20 artworks to the public collection. This year these art works will be judged by renowned artist Robert Wilson.

Cootamundra, as the birthplace of Sir Donald Bradman, has a long sporting heritage which has been highlighted through art by way of the Captains Walk. The Captains Walk, which will be completed this month, is a walk featuring the sculptured busts of each of the 43 Australian Cricket Captains. The most recent of these sculptures have been produced by artists from the Tom Bass Sculpture Studios in Sydney. In addition to this attraction being of significant sporting history we believe it will also become a renowned display of bronze sculpture.

*100 YEARS OF BRADMAN
Celebrating the Centenary of the birth of
Sir Donald Bradman in Cootamundra
on 27 August 2008*

To date Council has contributed \$391,210 toward this project with a grant of \$50,000 from the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage supplementing our commitment.

Another facility that has the potential to become one of the highlights of this district is the Cootamundra Arts and Cultural Centre (CACC). Council purchased a disused building in 2003 and since that time volunteers have transformed the building into a functional creative and performing arts facility.

The CACC now has two fine and visual arts workshops, three music studios and a pottery / woodwork studio. This is in addition to a performing arts rehearsal space and exhibition area plus the current project of the development of a theatre space. The CACC won the Local Government and Shires Association Cultural Award 2005 for Cultural Infrastructure.

Volunteers have contributed over 6,000 hours to this centre which is a significant indication of the community's desire to be recognised as a regional arts and cultural centre.

The CACC, through Council, has received two grants from Arts NSW both to the value of \$75,000. The second of these grants is committed to the current theatre project. However, the community, through labour, in kind work and fundraising has contributed in excess of \$176,000 to the CACC, \$12,000 of this being for the current project which only commenced in July. In addition to this Council has also provided funding of \$200,000 being for the purchase of the building and peripheral works. This is another example of Cootamundra's commitment to development as a regional cultural centre.

The CACC mission is to provide education, exhibition, production and performance of the arts whilst their motto is "an artist's playing field"

The CACC has a strategic plan for the next five years that will see facilities developed further. The CACC have three main ambitions. First is to have installed a fully sprung ballet floor. This is essential if we are to encourage significant ballet performances / rehearsals to our town. This has been costed at \$50,000 and we believe it will be the only fully sprung floor in rural NSW.

Second is the development of a film facility for film production, the showing of art film and for educational purposes. The final objective is to provide a total arts and cultural resource package for the education of youth and to consolidate the future.

Not only has the community embraced the creative and performing arts, the local High School also conduct a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course in Entertainment Studies. This links perfectly with the CACC strategic plan final objective. In fact, the performing arts cannot perform without appropriate and professional sound and lighting and the teacher of the Entertainment Studies course and his students have been providing these facilities for both the Cultural Centre and CADAS for many years.

Over the past two years over twenty students have completed this course and they have an enrolment this year of seventeen students. The teacher has also sought Education Department permission to conduct much of his course at the CACC. He and his students will soon complete all the wiring for lighting and sound for the entire centre. The future of the creative and performing arts in Cootamundra is therefore in good hands.

Dance is also strong in Cootamundra with two separate dance schools. Chris Edwards School of Dance was established in 1986 with one studio in the backyard. In 2002 the dance school moved to new premises which has two dance studios, a practice studio and a costume room. These top class facilities are used not only by Chris and her students, but another dance teacher and singing teacher. The successes of these dancers and teachers have been rewarded with two Canberra Area Theatre awards (CATS) in 1996 and 2000. The students perform an end of year concert that has raised over \$80,000 for Life Education.

In 2007 another dance studio was opened offering differing dance styles. Chris Wishart runs these from another top class facility. Chris runs classes in Tap, Jazz and Hip Hop. Students participate in a wide number of events including Eisteddfods, concerts and Royal Academy of Dance exams.

To provide a financial overview, Council and the community have contributed in excess of \$767,210 in the promotion of the arts and have received grants of \$200,000 from State and Commonwealth bodies. Through your inquiry it is hoped that additional financial resources and infrastructure can be accessed to further promote this town as a cultural hub. As you can see from the figures above we are not simply looking for handouts, however there comes a point where a small rural town can do with a helping hand.

I am sure that it is now clear that Cootamundra is committed to the creative and performing arts and it is important to note that in all of our pursuits to date Cootamundra Council and the community have been prepared to contribute significantly to our goal. We would now like to expand on our vision for the future and develop an arts and/or sculpture festival that will attract people to this district. This could be achieved with your assistance.

We have recently undergone structural change and have a new General Manager and now a renewed focus where the creative and performing arts will figure more prominently in our planning. This should occur during the first year of the new Council.

One particular aspect your committee will report on is the economic impacts on communities. For a rural town such as Cootamundra where growth is minimal, the economic impact will be extremely positive. If Cootamundra can be developed as a cultural hub for this region it will provide us with the economic stability that many rural towns are seeking. Therefore, attention to this part of your inquiry cannot be overstated.

Another focus of your study, accessibility of cultural and arts education, is one where we have already made substantial inroads in partnership with the local High School as previously stated. With additional infrastructure the CACC will become a centre for education of the arts as we have the personnel to undertake the role of educators.

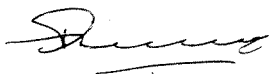
For your interest I have included a copy of our Arts Centre News so that you can see some of the activities that our community members undertake. Also included is an information sheet on The Wired Lab, which is a project of Dr Alan Lamb that is being undertaken locally. Cootamundra has the capacity to attract high profile artists and this momentum needs to be sustained. This can be achieved as a result of your enquiry.

I hope this submission has provided you with some valuable information about the development of arts and cultural infrastructure outside the Sydney CBD and is not seen purely as a push for Cootamundra. It is difficult to provide you with information without reference to our community's achievements.

It is sufficient to say that this study is of great interest to us as we have already embarked on this path and we look forward to your response to our submission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the inquiry. If you require further information please contact me on 6940 2100.

Yours faithfully



David Hume
Director Corporate Services
for
GENERAL MANAGER