

Submission
No 72

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

Organisation: The Shellharbour Feltmakers Group

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Date Received: 12/09/2008

RECEIVED
12/09/08

Shellharbour Feltmakers Group
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08.09.2008

To the Committee Manager,

We are writing to assist the inquiry into the development of an Arts and Cultural Plan for NSW.

We are a small group of women making textile crafts in a NSW regional town. As such we would like to share our concerns and hopes for an Arts and Cultural Plan in our area. The following are some of the points we would like to be considered in the inquiry:

- There is a sad distinct lack of arts venues in our area. We do not have a cultural centre space that would service those people within our community such as ourselves, who are not preoccupied with sport and recreation; there is a distinct overabundance of venues for those activities.
- In our region there has been a dramatic growth in housing population but this has not been provided for with a venue for the community's creative expression and sense of cultural identity. We desperately need an Arts Space.
- All small creative community groups such as ours must try to book public halls and community centre meeting rooms on an ongoing basis for workshops and exhibitions, which is highly unsatisfactory. The public infrastructure we have available to us is not suitable for the display of art and craft as we are not able to hang things on the walls and the lighting is inadequate for presenting artworks. In short the buildings available to us are not designed with our use in mind at all.
- Nor is the public infrastructure designed for running art and craft workshops and art skills training on a regular basis. We need a venue where we can hold workshops in gaining craft and art skills, practice in gaining higher skills in the ancient craft of feltmaking, and sell our products.
- The direct link between arts and tourism must be recognised. A venue for the arts is a means to bringing further tourism into the area. To creating jobs. To reducing social problems in our community by providing a venue and a space for people to express themselves and tell their stories.
- We are concerned that young artistic and creative people in our area do not see themselves or their work valued in the community and this leads to social problems or the young people moving away from Shellharbour. To create a strong community identity we need these young people to contribute to its future growth and development.
- We are of the opinion that Hazelhurst Art Gallery Centre in Sydney South is something similar to what we would hope for in our area of Shellharbour. It is a purpose built Art Centre with exhibition space, workshop areas, gallery shop and function centre.

We hope that one day the dream of a designated and well designed Art Centre for our vibrant community of Shellharbour will be fully realised.

Yours sincerely,



Anita Larkin on behalf of
The Shellharbour Feltmakers Group.