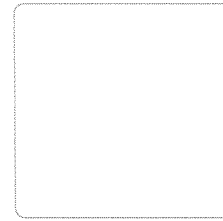
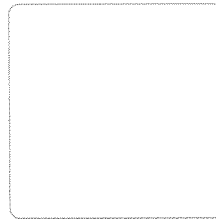


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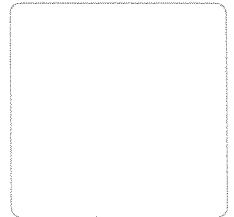
INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND
CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE OUTSIDE THE SYDNEY
CBD

Organisation: Baulkham Hills Shire Council
Name: Mr David Walker
Position: General Manager
Telephone: 02 9843 0555
Date Received: 29/08/2008



27 August 2008

RECEIVED
29/8/08



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

Dear Sir/Madam

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

Submissions have been invited by 29 August 2008 in regard to development of an arts and cultural plan for NSW and the alignment of this plan to broad government planning strategies for the development of arts and cultural infrastructure outside the Sydney CBD including regional areas.

Baulkham Hills Shire Council was informed by way of report to the Ordinary Meeting on 26 August 2008.

Issues of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure and Funding in Baulkham Hills Shire

Council's Cultural Plan for Baulkham Hills Shire 2005-2010 and Cultural Development Program have been developed in response to cultural needs and issues of the LGA including heritage, events, planning and arts practice. The Cultural Plan provides a range of cultural goals and strategies consistent with Council's Management Plan. The Cultural Development Program focuses on building the capacity of community based cultural activities and groups, informing and supporting the planning and implementation of infrastructure that meets local cultural needs, supporting the integration of local identity in the planning and design of local places, and, the enhancement of community involvement in events and activities.

Funding by the State Government through Arts NSW was crucial in the establishment stages of the Cultural Development Program. With rapid growth and change in the shire, an increased need has been identified for additional funding to support events, projects and networks which continue to celebrate local culture, identity and heritage.

The Shire's key vehicles for community celebration, learning and expressions of identity are events, libraries and facilities. Council's events current rely wholly on sponsorship and Council funding.



A Cultural Centre Feasibility Study was carried out in 2006 which recommended staged strategies to integrate the maintenance and growth of community involvement, audience growth and program development with the planning and management of facilities to ensure the Shire has appropriate and quality cultural opportunities and infrastructure. This was brought upon by the need to plan for the future viability of the Hills Centre as State Government plans for the North West Rail Link are progressing.

Cultural priorities identified through consultation and programs include working with the community to ensure the accessibility, utilisation, management, and enhancement of key community cultural assets such as the Castle Hill Showground, Balcombe Heights Estate, Castle Hill Heritage Park, Bella Vista Park Farm, exhibition spaces, community centres and libraries.

The following is Council's response in relation to the focus areas:

1. Issues of public and private funding and allocation of resources

- Council received funding from Arts NSW to employ its first Cultural Development Coordinator and also some project funding to progress the implementation of Council's Cultural Plan for Baulkham Hills 2005-2010. It has also been successful in obtaining other public funding for community cultural development projects as the cultural development program is now well-established.

2. Suitability of public infrastructure for arts and cultural life

- Council owns a number of cultural assets which provide a range of opportunities for arts and cultural experiences. Management of these facilities rely on providing a balance of compatible uses which, in their quality and management, can contribute to the local and shire-wide sense of community and culture. Business management/operational models ensure these facilities grow as preferred places for visitors, functions as venues for showcasing Shire's culture and contribute to a local sense of neighbourhood in a way that is appropriate to their scale, design and location. Council also supports any opportunities for local community-based management and coordination of these facilities.

3. The desirability of locating cultural facilities in close proximity to create hubs

- Satellite services are needed as hubs will be difficult to access given the geographic spread of the Shire.

4. Accessibility of cultural and arts education

- Research reveals that participation in the arts from an early age through a structured arts education enhances the academic outcomes and life skills of young people, particularly those who experience socio-economic disadvantage. There is an lack of emphasis of this perspective in early intervention programs which could add to our existing knowledge about the importance and particular contribution that the arts make to learning, identity, communication and community.

5. Economic impacts on communities

- Council recognises the importance of the venues play in the delivery of local professional productions. It continues to invest in ensuring quality performance spaces are maintained. Council through its Youth Programs also facilitate the development of local bands and has recently developed at HYPE Central, rehearsal spaces and recording studio.

6. 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.

- NSW State Plan is inadequate however, a cultural plan for the state will likewise be inadequate unless resources are provided to further the strategies outlined in the plan. There would be an argument to support Councils who already have cultural plans in place as they have been developed in response to specific local cultural needs and issues. It has been evident that a state plan only serves the purpose of providing broad, strategic directions which are best addressed through local plans e.g. no NSW Crime Prevention Plan but local community safety plans developed to respond to local issues.

7. Other relevant information

- The NSW State Plan aims to increase participation and integration in community activities through volunteering, sports, cultural and artistic activity especially for people from low income, non-English speaking and Aboriginal communities.
- Council leads and works with its stakeholders to plan and provide services and facilities that connect people with the local community. Our services and facilities respond to the changes in population demographics such as ageing (access2art) and support the large proportion of children (Children's Services Public Art Project) and young people (North West Rural Youth Art Project) with programs to provide them with a good start in life.

Conclusion

Council's Cultural Plan acknowledges that creativity, innovation and cultural development are key components of the Shire's growth, social well-being and quality of life and involves government maintaining an informed engagement with all sectors of the region.

Some of the issues and discussion points included in the inquiry highlight the importance of providing appropriate cultural infrastructure. However, this needs to be backed up by funding and resources to ensure maximum opportunities for involvement in cultural activities is provided to as many members of the community whether this is as active participants or audience.

Councils that have a cultural plan in place or have successfully integrated cultural planning into their overall management planning should be supported as there are significant gains to be had not only through the broad range of programs but also through cultural infrastructure and associated activities.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Walker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave Walker

GENERAL MANAGER