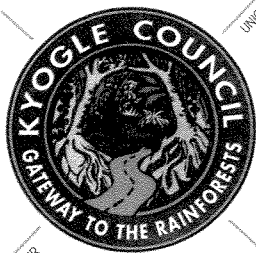


Submission
No 5

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

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20 August 2008

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



To the members of the NSW Public Works Committee,

This is a submission into the INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE OUTSIDE THE SYDNEY CBD by the Kyogle Council.

The Northern Rivers region is recognised as a culturally diverse and artistically active region. The development of the Cultural Arts Industry was highlighted as the regions highest priority during a review of regional priorities undertaken by the Area Consultative Committee in 2007. (www.northernriversacc.com.au/nracc.htm)

Other significant reports that have come from this region regarding the Creative Arts Industries are the Northern Rivers Regional Industry and Economic Plan (RIEP) 2006 which identified the Creative Industries as being those industries that are considered to be 'new drivers' of economic growth and development in the global economy. (www.investnorthernrivers.com.au/admin/uploads/RIEP_2006_Progress_Report_Jan_05_Final.pdf)

In 2006 a major study on the Creative Industries was released by Cathy Henkel titled 'Imagining the Future 2'. This report identified the significant role carried out by the creative industries as a contributor to the cultural and social capital of the region. Both of these reports identified the diversity of growth in the Creative Industries within the Northern Rivers Region. Following on from these reports Art Northern Rivers is currently undertaking a Cultural Arts Industry Strategic Plan which Kyogle Council is involved in.

Kyogle Council currently has representation on the boards of both Northern Rivers Arts and Northern Rivers Tourism and is actively engaged in the development of the Northern Rivers Regional Cultural Strategy.

Kyogle Councils' submission covers areas of interest relating to cultural arts infrastructure and general arts industry development.

Generally funding made available for cultural arts programs in regional areas is not enough. It is difficult for smaller population areas to generate viable sustainable projects from large one-off seed-funding programs. One of the fundamental changes that could address this issue could be the review of the processes involved in attaining Gift Deductibility Status in an effort to attract higher levels of private sector funding.

Funding for arts education is being eroded in regions i.e. TAFE programs are being discontinued, as they are proving unviable. An inability for remote communities to access tertiary facilities means that people are unable to participate in arts and cultural educational opportunities.

A process of determining an agreed Cultural Arts Facility development program could incorporate funding programs that aim to redevelop existing infrastructure i.e. halls and showgrounds to ensure that they have a valuable role in delivering contemporary cultural arts programs in rural areas. Currently much of this existing infrastructure is aging and physically incapable of addressing accessibility issues for performers, arts and educational practitioners and audiences. These facilities are an ongoing part of the social fabric of the communities where they are located.

The advent of broadband and other Internet services facilitates access to educational opportunities. Resourcing Community Technology Centres (CTC's) to run training would enhance a community's ability to understand the value of and provide a means of access to emerging technologies.

In some regions, summer schools are held in existing local community halls where they become used as teaching facilities. Community hall committees and Council's throughout NSW struggle to maintain their halls and redevelopment of these aging community assets would ensure their ongoing value in the community doubling as contemporary educational facilities and provide remote access for isolated communities.

Cultural precincts that are developed to encompass these facilities in a collaborative manner may also assist in efforts to attract Caretaker and/or precinct manager roles in small rural towns covering a collection of previously under-utilised facilities. There is a high need to develop sustainable business models for the use of these public facilities to ensure their sustainable operation and continuing redevelopment over time.

Lack of public transport in regional areas and high cost of fuel and a raising awareness on personal carbon footprints will result in communities wishing to access local facilities as well as centrally located cultural hubs within a region. Cultural precincts can become economic assets to central business district areas and incorporate a sense of community ownership and belonging.

Lack of cultural infrastructure results in a lack of economic overflow into the regions and there is a high cost to attract cultural events to rural regions. Larger populations tend to attract bigger events and higher budgets.

Encouragement for big-ticketed cultural events to adopt fringe events and co-promotion policy for funded programs may provide an opportunity to spread attendees and therefore their contributions throughout the region. This would reduce pressure on communities where events are outgrowing their locations (for example Splendour event

in Byron Bay) and would provide access to events in low socio-economic areas (i.e. Byron Blues Festival have fringe song-writing event in Kyogle area).

There are opportunities for government, corporate and community partnerships to utilise available built environs to house or hold creative cultural works that link the values of the community and leads to the development of a sense of belonging and makes use of required infrastructure in an innovative way. For example, RTA road stops can be painted with murals by local artists depicting local stories and points of interest.

Support services for people with disabilities are required to facilitate access and inclusion of people with special needs to arts and cultural education services. Artists with disabilities in regional areas are not catered for in being able to access suitable venues to perform as artists or attend as an audience, due to most of the performance infrastructure not catering for people with mobility issues.

I hope this information has been of assistance to your committee and thank you for the opportunity to participate in your inquiry process.

Yours faithfully



Arthur Piggott
GENERAL MANAGER