

Submission
No 78

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

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**Submission by
Shellharbour City Council**

To the

**NSW Legislative Assembly
Public Works Committee
Inquiry into the
Development of Arts and Cultural infrastructure
Outside the Sydney CBD**

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AN INTRODUCTION TO SHELLHARBOUR

*Shellharbour is named due to the abundance of shells in the area.
It was originally known as Peterborough.*

Shellharbour City is located in the Illawarra Region of New South Wales, about 100 kilometres south of Sydney. Shellharbour City is bounded by Wollongong City in the north, the Tasman Sea in the east, the Municipality of Kiama in the south and Wingecarribee Shire in the west.

Shellharbour City includes the suburbs and rural localities of Albion Park, Albion Park Rail, Barrack Heights, Barrack Point, Blackbutt, Calderwood, Croom, Dunmore, Flinders, Lake Illawarra, Macquarie Pass, Mount Warrigal, North Macquarie, Oak Flats, Shell Cove, Shellharbour, Shellharbour City Centre, Tongarra, Tullimbar, Warilla and Yellow Rock.

Shellharbour City is an expanding urban area with significant rural areas and some industrial and commercial land uses. The City encompasses a total land area of about 155 square kilometres, including beaches, rivers, National and State Parks and other significant parklands. The main urban centres are Shellharbour City Centre, Albion Park and Oak Flats. Most of the rural areas are in the south and west, with rural land used mainly for crop farming, dairy farming and grazing.

The original inhabitants of the Shellharbour area were the Wodi Wodi tribe of the Thurawal Aboriginal people.

European settlement dates from 1817, when the first land grants were made. Land was used mainly for sheep and cattle grazing, wheat growing and cedar-getting. Growth was minimal until the 1850s when the Shellharbour township was laid out.

Early expansion took place in the 1880s and 1890s, spurred by the construction of the railway line, the dairy industry, basalt mining and coal mining. Growth continued in the early 1900s, aided by the construction of many holiday houses. The southern areas developed quicker than the north, due to better road access.

Significant development occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, aided by industrial growth in nearby Port Kembla and the construction of public housing estates. Growth took place particularly in the eastern areas, around Warilla, Mount Warrigal, Barrack Point and Barrack Heights.

The population increased during the 1990s, from 46,000 in 1991 to nearly 57,000 in 2001, continuing to increase to nearly 60,000 in 2006 (64, 296 in 2007). This growth was mainly in the southern and western areas, particularly in Albion Park, Flinders, Shell Cove, Shellharbour City Centre and Tullimbah, population growth is expected to continue.

Major features of the City include Macquarie Pass National Park, Killalea State Park, Bass Point Reserve (Coastal Marine Reserve), Blackbutt Forest Reserve, Myimbarr Wetlands, Lake Illawarra, Illawarra Regional Airport, Croom Regional Sporting Complex, Shellharbour Square Shopping Centre, Shellharbour Hospital, Illawarra Institute of Technology (Shellharbour Campus) and various beaches. The City is served by the Illawarra Highway, the Princes Highway and the South Coast railway line. (Shellharbour Community Profile, ABS 2008).

SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

1. Relevant Arts and Cultural Planning or Strategies

- Shellharbour City Council has an up-dated draft version of Council's 2000-2004 Cultural Plan. The focus of this document is cultural development processes rather than strategic cultural planning. Shellharbour City Council has no strategic cultural plan or planning officer.

2. Council's experience with the state grants process

- In recent years, Shellharbour has had a successful number of grants from Regional Arts NSW.

3. The amount of funding spent on arts & cultural activities

- Council's Cultural Program Budget is \$14, 500 per annum.
- Council's Cultural Program has received arts funding from Regional Arts NSW, totalling \$13, 750 in small grants for the period of 2003 to 2008.
- Tongarra Museum in Albion Park has received \$2, 000 from Regional Arts NSW
- Section 94 Percent for Art on new facilities has provided opportunities for art-built-in & internal & external mural projects on community centres.
- In 2006 a budget of \$13,000 was available for art in a cycle path. This amount included materials and labour.
- Shellharbour Youth Services Team's budget of \$28, 000 is used for hiring casual staff, activity program, venue & equipment hire etc.
- The Community Services Team allocates funding of \$20,000 to conduct activities and programs through out the year including Harmony Day, Festival of the Forest, White Ribbon Day, Seniors Week, Good Neighbourhood Program and other associated community events.
- Council provides \$3, 000 for acquisitive art prize administered by the FOCAS Art Group.
- Sorry Day and NAIDOC funding of \$10,000 is separate to the Cultural Program Budget and administered by Council's Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer.
- Additionally Council conducts Carols by Candlelight, a Council New Years Party and Australia Day celebrations.

4. Arts & Cultural staff

- Tongarra Museum has a part-time curator, 14 hours per week.
- Council has a part-time (21 hrs) Arts Development Officer. Given the part time hours this limits the number of grant applications and then there is the consideration of hours involved in effectively administering the grants and overseeing the project outcomes.

5. Partnerships Private Sector Funding

- Council receives private funding and in-kind sponsorship for some of their activities and events form local businesses and media.

6. Suitability of Public infrastructure for arts and cultural life

The cultural life in Shellharbour is primarily sport, recreation and adventure. These are catered for with a wide variety of sporting facilities, swimming pools, beaches and the Lake foreshore.

The Roo Theatre, a community theatre group, who are housed in an old Council hall are located in the only performing arts space in Shellharbour.

Council's Community Centres are used for creative activities but these activities are negotiated in and around service providers and other permanent bookings. Not all the centres are appropriately built for creative expression, in particular for 'wet' activities, multi media, printmaking or photography.

7. Council Owned Buildings and Facilities

Community Centres

- Warilla (art-built-in & mural).
- Albion Park Rail (art-built-in & mural and interactive sculptured playground).
- Albion Park (interior & exterior murals).
- Oak Flats (interior appliqué, public art bike rack & exterior mural).
- Flinders Child & family Centre, Flinders (ceramic focus) 1 x interior art mural and 3 exterior murals).
- Warilla Child Care centre, Warilla.
- Senior Citizens, Warilla.
- SACYA operating out of a sports hall in Warilla.
- HACC Centre, Albion Park.
- Smarts Building, Albion Park Rail (wood carving & china Painting & Koori Men's Group).
- Centenary Hall, Albion Park.

Libraries

- Warilla
- Oak Flats
- Albion Park
- Shellharbour Village (limited hours)

Museum

- Tongarra Museum

Sporting facilities

- Shellharbour City Stadium
- Approximately 45 Sporting fields
- Swimming pools (3)

Surf Clubs

- Warilla Barrack Point Surf Club
- Shellharbour Surf Club

Theatre

- Roo Theatre (theatre & dance)

Youth Centre

- Blackbutt Youth Centre (creative activities)

Men's Shed

- Old Council Building, Shellharbour Village (woodwork production)

Parks & Reserves

- In excess of 250 including major areas, Blackbutt Forest, Lake Foreshores and Chrome Road Sporting Complex.

Shellharbour Cultural Groups (creative focus)

- Tongarra Heritage Society
- Shell Cove Craft Group
- Shellharbour & Kiama Photography Club
- Senior Citizens Art Group
- Focas Art Group
- Shellharbour Art group
- Shellharbour Women's Felt Making Group
- Shellharbour Poetry & Writing Group
- Albion Park Quilters
- Shellharbour Knit & Natter Group
- Oak Flats Quilters and Sewing Groups
- Reading & Knitting Groups at our libraries
- CALD
- Indigenous & Torres Strait Islander- SACYA

8. Privately owned cultural infrastructure

- Greater Union Cinema

Museums

- HARS (Historical Aircraft Restoration Society), Illawarra Regional Airport
- Illawarra Light Rail Museum, Albion Park

Art Gallery

- Dee Kramer, Macquarie Pass (photography)
- Exhibiting Room, White House Café, Shellharbour Village

Music & Theatre

- Music, Drama & Theatre Academy, George Street, Warilla

Dance Studios

- Warilla
- Oak Flats
- Albion Park Rail
- Mount Terry & Barrack Heights Public schools
- Albion Park
- Roo Theatre

Clubs and Pubs

- Numerous – live bands, specialty events, bingo etc...

SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL FUTURE PROJECTS

Shellharbour City has many exciting projects planned for the future. The Shell Cove Project is already a part of our existing landscape with the golf course now completed. Many other community projects are contained in the Section 94 Contributions Management Plan and other annual capital works allocations.

The major projects are: -

- Central Library
- Continued development of Myimbarr a Community Park
- Enhancement of the Lake Illawarra Foreshore
- Improvement of our Cycleway/Footpath network
- Multifunction Arts Centre
- Council Administration Offices, Chamber and Civic Auditorium
- Shellharbour Community Centre
- Shellharbour Library
- Western valley Sportsfields
- Benson Basin Sportsfields
- Shellharbour City Performance Theatre

LOCATION OF CULTURAL FACILITIES IN PROXIMITY TO CREATIVE HUBS

- Shellharbour does not have a specific cultural hub but there is the potential to develop this in the new City Centre and in Shellharbour Village areas.
- It would be desirable to attract cultural facilities into the Shellharbour Region to boost our creative identity and build creative hubs. There have been some opportunities in the past for cultural industries to relocate to Shellharbour but unfortunately there was no available public space.
- It would be desirable for the decentralisation of some cultural institutions/organisations from Sydney CBD into the Shellharbour Region. There has been a considerable growth of cultural infrastructure and industries in Wollongong and Nowra and it would be ideal if Shellharbour was known as the next south coast 'cultural' habitat.

ACCESSIBILITY OF CULTURAL AND ARTS EDUCATION

- Shellharbour City Council's Cultural Program provides workshops with professional tutors in literary arts, performance, felt making, weaving, wood carving, public art processes and modest visual arts expression.
- Formal cultural & visual arts education is offered at the University of Wollongong and Wollongong Institute of Technology. Short art courses (recreational focus) are offered through WEA in Wollongong.
- Shellharbour has rail public transport and a private bus company operates here. Community members have commented that transport in the LGA is both time consuming and inappropriate to their needs.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON COMMUNITIES

- To date there is no study that specifically identifies as to what the economic impact is of art and cultural production on Shellharbour's economy. There have been a few incidences of commercial feature films been made in the Shellharbour LGA but the economic benefit to the local economy has not been clearly known or documented.
- Other identified benefits are the development of Shellharbour's social and cultural capital and this is hard to place a figure on. However, this is identifiable through the obvious sense of place, wellbeing and belonging felt and expressed by Shellharbour citizens.

DESIRABILITY OF A CULTURAL PLANS DIVERSITY, ACCESS, WITH REFERENCE TO THE TOURISM

Shellharbour would support a NSW State-wide Cultural Plan with the opportunity of developing key cultural tourism links. There are no legislative requirements for Local Government to implement broad strategic cultural planning considerations into other Council policies.

Shellharbour City has earmarked for the future a Multi Function Arts Centre in Council's Section 94 Contributions Management Plan but as yet no definitive date has been set for its construction. A new City Centre will be built in the near future, including a new library and a modest museum exhibition space as part of the overall design.

Wollongong and Nowra in the last 10 years have invested in major cultural infrastructure and with Shellharbour located in between these two LGA'S, these developments have a tendency to over shadowed Shellharbour's cultural identity.

Community members would like Shellharbour to be culturally competitive city providing visitors and community members with a unique creative experience. Although Shellharbour falls short on cultural infrastructure, our natural assets are used effectively for outdoor celebrations and events accommodating local needs and attracting interstate visitors.

Shellharbour residents and visitors value our natural environments such as Shellharbour and Warilla beaches, Lake Illawarra, the escarpment area and the rural aspect. These natural environments are paramount to Shellharbour's identity and cultural expressions and it is what makes Shellharbour unique in the south coast region.

Shellharbour citizens are proud of their environment and strive for every opportunity to showcase to the rest of Australia how beautiful and engaging the Shellharbour area is. With the proposed state-of-the-art cultural infrastructure earmarked for Shellharbour, it would be difficult to find a better choice of place to live where you could have a culturally enriched life.