

Submission  
No 10

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

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

26 August 2008

Dear Sir/Mdm

**RE: Inquiry into the Development of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure outside the Sydney CBD**

Please find attached North Sydney Council's most recent Arts and Cultural Development Strategic Plan which addresses many of the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry.

I would be happy to speak further to this material on my return from leave on 10 September 2008. Should information be required before this time your contact at Council would be Narelle Spooner on 9936 8187

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Ellis'.

Martin Ellis  
Director, Community and Library Services

RECEIVED  
27/08/08

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**Arts and Cultural Development**  
**Strategic Plan: 2008-2010**

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**February 2008**

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# **The Arts and Cultural Development Strategic Plan 2008 - 2010**

## **Our Vision**

To support cultural development in the community and provide a program of cultural experiences.

## **The Arts and Cultural Development Strategic Plan Aims**

The purpose of this plan is to set out the strategies with which Council will deliver arts and cultural services over the next five years to the North Sydney Community.

- 1. To maintain the service levels set out in North Sydney Council's Management Plan 2008-2010. (Page 4)**
- 2. To address ongoing issues arising from North Sydney's Cultural Plan (Pages 5 - 19 )**
- 3. To address issues arising from the North Sydney Council's Social Plan 2008-2011. (Pages 20 - 23)**

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In 2007 Council carried out a series of consultative processes with the North Sydney community. The aim was to develop a plan that would highlight social issues that were of most concern to the community and strategies that would best address these. The Social Plan aims to address service gaps, prioritising key issues that are not effectively covered by State and Federal Government initiatives.

This Arts and Cultural Strategic plan will address issues and service gaps that have been highlighted by the Social Plan 2008-2010 while also addressing needs that came to light during the life of North Sydney's Cultural Plan 2004-2007. There are also ongoing services from North Sydney Council's Management Plan 2008-2010 that will be highlighted in this Strategic Plan.

# 1. To maintain the service levels set out in North Sydney Council's Management Plan 2008-2010.

The table below sets out the service levels that need to be maintained in 2008 – 2010:

## Service levels

- **Exhibition outlets.**  
**Direct:** North Sydney Heritage Centre (3 exhibitions pa), Primrose Park Gallery (52 weeks pa), Hutley Hall (4 weeks pa), Don Bank Museum (2 exhibitions pa), Council Chambers and Administrative areas (50 works rotated semi annually)  
**Indirect:** North Sydney Community Centre 12pa (rent subsidy), Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre Gallery ?pa (rent subsidy), Royal Art Society at Lavender Bay (donation).
- **Studio Space**  
**Direct:** Primrose Park low-cost Artists Studio ( 4 artists pa)  
**Indirect:** Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre (rent subsidy)
- **Supported Art programs** Eight Well Being per year (through community centres)
- **Artistic recognition** Annual North Sydney Art Prize (200 works hung; 10 categories)
- **Collection building** One public art work acquired, and two “gallery” works, pa
- **Events** Six events pa (e.g. Page to Stage, Australia Day, Carols, Seniors Week, Carnivale, Childrens Week)
- **Preservation/conservation** Climate controlled art storage (300 work capacity)
- **Publications** Two annually (e.g. What's On; and Public Art in North Sydney), including large format and translated
- **Donations to cultural organisations** Minimum six groups supported annually

## 2. To address ongoing issues arising from North Sydney's Cultural Plan

Consultation carried out during the development of the Cultural Plan specifically addressed the community's cultural needs and due to such focus does not replicate the broad ranging issues highlighted in the 2008 Social Plan.

The following audit of cultural venues highlights the strengths and weaknesses faced in providing cultural activities within North Sydney's existing infrastructure.

### Cultural Venues Audit

#### Strengths

- While Council's cultural facilities are of a moderate standard (with the exception of North Sydney Heritage Centre, the Hutley Hall and North Sydney Community Centre), they have the great advantage of being affordable to practising artists and to Council's program of events – and are consequently well supported by the community.
- Exhibition quality lighting and hanging systems are available in four venues including Hutley Hall although it is of limited availability and Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre although it competes with other users. The North Sydney Heritage Centre and Primrose Park Gallery are the only spaces dedicated to exhibitions fulltime.
- North Sydney Community Centre's Craft Room has become a facility of great cultural importance, with these programs being run in a fit for purpose space for the first time.
- Pianos of a good standard are tuned regularly are in four of the halls.
- A climate controlled art store protects Council's art collections.
- Numerous church halls, small private galleries, a major private museum and function centre (Mary McKillop Place), an outstanding Cinema (Cremorne Orpheum) and two Live Theatre venues (Independent & Ensemble) add to the stock of available venues. School halls and auditoria are a significant resource, though generally speaking only for their own pupils.
- Outdoor venues such as Civic Park

#### Weaknesses

- While Council has no venue with acoustics of concert standard, the privately owned Independent Theatre (which does meet these standards) is in the heart of North Sydney and is commercially affordable but little used by community groups. Other private venues are the Northside Baptist Church (home to North Sydney's Symphony Orchestra) and the small Crows Nest Performing Arts Centre.
- While not raked, the Hutley Hall has a portable stage which is well used. Two halls (Neutral Bay and McMahons Point) have small stages, but are heavily booked for non performance activity and (like the Hutley Hall) neither have dressing rooms, wings or lighting and sound systems of any quality.
- Two exhibition spaces are partially inaccessible (Primrose Park and May Gibbs' Nutcote).
- Council's Indoor spaces are generally too small for theatrical performances (the Hutley Hall with 200 is by far the most capacious).
- One is poorly served by public transport (Primrose Park).
- Some are perceived as relatively unsafe after dark (Primrose Park, and to a lesser extent, the Music Shell in St Leonards Park).
- Three Council venues have POPEs (Place of Public Entertainment licenses) – Nutcote, North Sydney Community Centre and the Hutley Hall – while these authorise cultural activities they are also expensive to create.

<p>Bradfield Park, St. Leonards Park, Blues Point Reserve, St. Thomas' Rest Park and Cremorne Point are used for many of Council's Cultural events. Council has two outdoor spaces ideal for theatrical performances (The Music Shell and the Amphitheatre in Civic Park) – both with lighting, power and dressing room space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Primrose Park, Council's Arts complex and Council's Hutley Hall, have excellent parking for exhibitions</li> <li>➤ Council has three museums. Don Bank is one of the first cottages built on the North Shore and is set up as a "house" museum in the period of the time. May Gibbs' Nutcote celebrates the life and work of May Gibbs and Sexton's Cottage is situated in St. Thomas' Rest Park which is one of the earliest European burial grounds on the North Shore.</li> <li>➤ Stanton Library is regarded as one of the best in the state and has excellent audio visual facilities and access to the internet. The Library conducts Writers' talks, historical tours, literature groups, historical exhibitions etc. Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre also has a small library which is open to the uses of the Centre.</li> <li>➤ Two commercial art galleries operate within Council owned facilities – McGrath's Art Gallery and Joan's on Ridge and Miller, however there are approximately 8 privately owned galleries in the North Sydney area.</li> <li>➤ Luna Park adds to the life and vitality of North Sydney and is visited by tourists and people from other areas as well as by the North Sydney community.</li> <li>➤ Markets operate weekly in various locations around North Sydney and the North Sydney Noodle Market operates on Friday evenings during the summer months.</li> <li>➤ Three accessible Community Centres offer cultural activities and one Youth Centre specialises in youth focussed activities and events.</li> <li>➤ Sports facilities such as North Sydney Oval and North Sydney Olympic Pool are suitable for special events and are accessible.</li> </ul>	<p>and maintain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The museums are manned by volunteers and are only open for limited periods during the week/weekend.</li> <li>➤ Outdoor venues are subject to weather restraints and lack of power for lighting/sound etc. Many of the toilets in parks are inaccessible and there is often no provision for stage/dressing rooms/storage for props etc.</li> <li>➤ The majority of the commercial art galleries are housed in old buildings need to utilize upstairs or downstairs hanging areas and are therefore inaccessible.</li> <li>➤ There is a lack of affordable parking facilities for users of Luna Park, compelling users to park in the streets causing congestion. Nearby residents complain of not being able to park in their street and of noise pollution caused by the rides.</li> <li>➤ As markets are usually held outdoors, they are also affected by weather constraints.</li> <li>➤ There is a lack of affordable parking facilities for users of Luna Park, compelling users to park in the streets causing congestion. Nearby residents complain of not being able to park in their street and of noise pollution caused by the rides.</li> </ul>
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## **Cultural Plan**

The five identified issues below arose from North Sydney's Cultural Plan:

- **Affordable space for cultural activities**
- **Cultural activities and support for people with disabilities, older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**
- **Parking and transport**
- **Range of cultural activities/events - information and promotion**
- **Inclusion of art in public spaces**

Many projects were created to address the above issues highlighted by the community. Some projects met the community needs more successfully than others, while some projects during execution identified new needs. In this paper some of the key successes from the Cultural Plan are highlighted along with any new issues that may have arisen during the life of the plan.

- **Affordable space for cultural activities**

**Council's Hutley Hall** was converted into a gallery space in 2001 to enable the *North Sydney Art Prize* to be held there on an annual basis. Since then the hall has been made available free of charge twice per year to arts groups to hold their own exhibitions. The Hutley Hall is located upstairs in the Council Chambers, so it does not attract passers by in the same way a commercial gallery would do in a prominent location. As the Hutley Hall is heavily booked throughout the year as a multi-purpose facility, it is not possible to extend any more bookings throughout the year than the two already provided.

**Primrose Park Community Hall** was recently converted into a functional and affordable gallery space for artists. A lighting system was installed to create appropriate light for illuminating artworks as well as a versatile hanging system to allow an infinite number of hanging possibilities. Artists have been very responsive and enthusiastic in regard to the new gallery space. Although Primrose Park is a facility that is highly used, it generally attracts people who are already aware of the facility. Because of its location, tucked away in parkland, it also does not attract passing traffic. Many artists who have exhibited in the Primrose Park Gallery are grateful for an affordable space in North Sydney but are still keen to have a more prominently located space, preferably in the Central Business District. Primrose Park Gallery is still utilized by various sports clubs on Saturdays throughout the year. Although exhibitions can take place between Sunday and Friday bookings are limited to these days during the winter months when sports clubs have access to the site.

In 2006 North Sydney Council completed the conversion of the lower level storage space at Primrose Park into a highly functional area for artists to use as **studio space**. Council currently attracts two artists every six months to take up the space for a nominal fee. The artists are required to exhibit their results from the six-months in the Primrose Park Gallery at the end of the lease. Despite the success in attracting artists most tend to be retirees as many artists need to maintain regular work to support their art practise. Therefore the studio does not attract artists from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds. Funding could be sought to subsidise artists' living costs while carrying out six month leases at Primrose Park Studio.

**The Independent and Ensemble Theatres** are privately owned and therefore financially driven, so are not generally used by community groups either because of unavailability or because hiring costs are prohibitive. However the Ensemble Theatre does provide support to *Young Dramatists Page to Stage* and allows two performances and two rehearsals to take place annually at the theatre free of charge. They also assist with bookings and seating arrangements and promote the event on their website. *The Actors Forum* holds five performances per year at the Independent Theatre and is given the theatre at a slightly reduced rate and Council offers the group a subsidy to further alleviate this expense. However the space is unaffordable for most community groups. The Crows Nest Performing Arts Centre and some church/school halls provide lower cost performance space for community groups, but there is still a perceived need for a larger affordable theatre space in North Sydney.

**Don Bank Museum** has been made available at no cost to various community arts groups for rehearsals and meetings. These groups include Live Poets, Page to Stage, Shakespeare on the Green and The Actors Forum. The Royal Art Society also has access to the Museum to stage up to four exhibitions each year, at no cost to the society. May Gibbs' Nutcote hosts exhibitions and cultural events at various times throughout the year as well.

North Sydney Council has been working with the community and key stakeholders over several years planning for the reuse and convergence of the **Coal Loader** site, Waverton into public open space. Council has proposed that public art be incorporated into the site and Council's Art Section has submitted funding applications in an effort to finance such projects. Council sees community involvement in such plans as essential and will continue to consult with the community at every developmental stage. To complement the established consultative process, a weekend workshop is planned to take place on site to determine the kinds of arts experiences the community would like to see established.

**Mount Street Plaza** in North Sydney's CBD is now being utilised as a public performance space during the week, with specialist entertainment provided prior to Christmas. This has been popular with CBD workers and has helped to "liven" the place up and give more "heart" to the CBD. Council has also implemented a *Busking Policy* to encourage performance artists to engage with the North Sydney community in a safe and responsible manner and to allow these artists the freedom to perform in various locations.

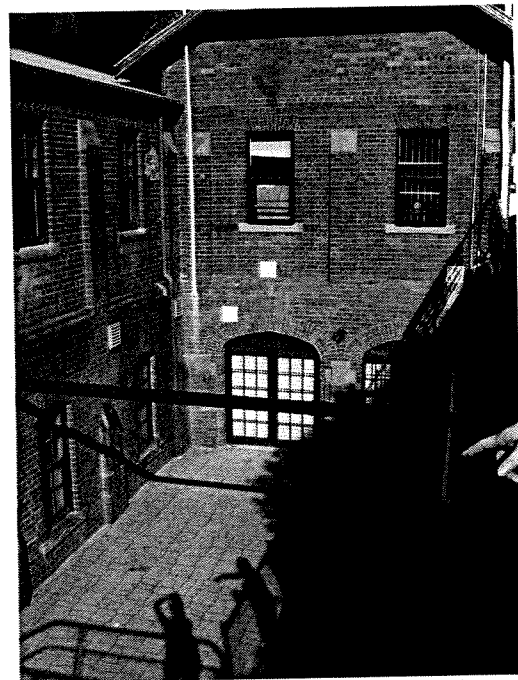
Located between the Council Chambers and Stanton Library, the **Civic Centre** has increasingly attracted more community festivals and events each year. The North Sydney Community Centre supported by Council, co-ordinates the regular North Sydney Markets every second Saturday and Northside Produces Markets every third Saturday. Through out summer the North Sydney Noodle Market takes place every Friday night. Council regularly hosts free community events in the centre including the very popular annual Children's Festival and Community Carols.

**Other outdoor venues** such as Bradfield Park, St. Leonards Park, Blues Point Reserve, St. Thomas' Rest Park and Cremorne Point are used for many of Council's free Cultural events. The newly refurbished BP site has been utilised for Jazz concerts and Berry Island is hired by Sydney Jazz Club as a venue for performances once a month. North Sydney Oval is used for a venue for some community events including the popular *Starlight Cinema*. However many of the outdoor venues (with the exception of North Sydney Oval, Civic Park and St. Leonards Park) have no access to power, accessible toilets, staging and dressing room /storage facilities, making larger scale theatrical performances difficult. Also, inclement weather is often a problem. Many community groups attempting to organise cultural events outdoors have the added burden of not being able to obtain affordable public liability insurance. This has led to a downturn in the community being able to provide their own events and the onus has been increasingly on Council to provide them. Cultural and sporting groups can apply for funding through Council's Donations Program and Sports Development Fund to assist with costs such as public liability, equipment and venue hire, however funds are limited.

North Sydney Council successfully launched the **Lower North Shore Regional Cultural Spaces Booklet**. The booklet highlights sites in the lower North Shore that are available for hire and that may be suitable for cultural events and activities. Although the booklet is concise in listing the venues and accurate in location details many venues were not clear about accessibility. In future if a new booklet were to be created a venue accessibility audit would need to be carried out before such information could be included. The creation of the booklet also highlighted sites that were well equipped for cultural events but were not able to meet Public Liability requirements. For example some private schools in the area had exceptional facilities but could not provide the after hours staff to manage the venue and cover Public Liability requirements.



Artist at North Sydney Art Prize, 2007



New studio at Primrose Park

## Swot Analysis: Affordable space for cultural activities

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Development of well equipped affordable gallery space</li> <li>➤ Development of an affordable artist's studio space for up to 2 artists ever 6 months</li> <li>➤ Enabled more free rehearsal space to be available to local Arts groups</li> <li>➤ Outdoor areas utilized for free cultural events and activities</li> <li>➤ Council funding is available to assist cultural groups with public liability, equipment and venue hire</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New gallery space located in secluded area</li> <li>➤ Gallery used by sports groups restricting length of exhibitions</li> <li>➤ Problem attracting a diverse group of artists to apply for the studio space leases.</li> <li>➤ Limited access for to power and other facilities in many outdoor areas</li> <li>➤ Council funding to assist community groups is limited</li> <li>➤ Council unable to attract external arts funding</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Space at Don Bank Museum for artist-in-residence.</li> <li>➤ A consultative weekend workshop planned at the Coal Loader site.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NIL</li> </ul>

**Intent:** Provide affordable spaces for cultural activities

### Strategies to be maintained and developed

- Council will continue to organise events/exhibitions at Primrose Park, in an effort to attract new people to the facility.
- Council will seek funding opportunities to help subsidise artists living costs while carrying out six month leases at Primrose Park Studio.
- Council will continue to seek funding to support an artist-in-residence program at Don Bank Museum.
- Council will seek funding opportunities to assist in the development of Arts projects/facilities at the Coal Loader site.
- Council will explore ways to improve its outdoor facilities for events
- Council will continue to support cultural groups through the community donations and sports development funds.

### Identified Needs

- Centrally located affordable exhibition space.
- 300 seat affordable performance space.

- **Cultural activities and support for people with disabilities, older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**

North Sydney Council does not provide specific activities/events for **people with disabilities** but supports the inclusion of people with disabilities in all its activities/events. Council works in partnership with Disability Service Providers aiming to promote cultural events while more importantly encouraging participation in event organisation and delivery. Council has been supporting the involvement of people with disabilities in many community performances/events. Each year young people with disabilities perform in *Page to Stage*, a cultural event that has been successfully running for nearly fifteen years. Page to Stage involves young people in playwriting, acting, directing, dramaturgy and theatre production under the guidance of professional theatre practitioners. The final selection of plays is performed by young people at the Ensemble Theatre each year.

North Sydney Council's *Creating Wellbeing* is an ongoing program that promotes a wide range of arts experiences, encouraging creative exploration, self-expression and positive social interaction. While all community members are invited to participate, the program is targeted at Mental Health Service Providers with the aim of reducing reported isolation experienced by people affected by mental illness. The program is constantly evolving, directed by participant's ideas and creative direction. Over the years there have been several exhibitions of participants' works, during Mental Health Week at the Wellbeing Expo 2005 & 2006, as well as a showcase of animations created in a public art project, *Getting Animated*, in 2007. Participants have also regularly taken part in North Sydney Council's prestigious Art Prize and there is now a specific sponsored category for people with disabilities. The North Sydney Art Prize allows approximately 200 (mostly local) amateur and professional artists to depict their impressions of the North Sydney area. The exhibition is viewed by approximately 1000 people over a ten-day period.

Although the *Creating Wellbeing* program is proving to be increasingly popular, the need to reach isolated people who are not linked with services remains the biggest hurdle. Council Officers need to continually promote programs such as *Creating Wellbeing* directly to communities where members are reporting social isolation. This needs to be done at a grass roots level and on a regular basis.

**Access** to Council's cultural venues is generally good, with some exceptions. Under its Disability Discrimination Action Plan (Section 7) Council engages in continuous improvement of its facilities for all disabilities, with hearing loops installed in several Centres, signage improvements at the Olympic Pool and Stanton Library, continuous paths of travel completed at the Hutley Hall, North Sydney Oval and Kendall Community Centre, audio and Braille walking tours of the foreshores and Nutcote Museum, walking trails and other heritage sites, as well as major work such as lifts at Planet X, North Sydney Oval and Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre. Council maintains in print an access planning guide for community events and publishes access maps on its homepage. The What's On annual calendar of events is published in large print formats and other languages.

The Crows Nest Centre provides a program incorporating English classes, computer skills, art/craft activities and excursions for people from **culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**. This program is seen as a benchmark for community centres in North Sydney, though the much smaller resources of the other centres has meant that it is currently restricted to the Crows Nest Centre, where its Migrant Settlement Service is funded by the Department of Immigration.

Council has supported several community arts programs through the Crows Nest Centre. *Beginnings* was the first in a series of creative workshops offered through the centre. Over seven weeks CALD community members were invited to paint, print-make, draw and collage images about their experience of living in North Sydney. An exhibition of participants' works was shared with the community in the weeks following the workshops. What became clear in the course of the workshops was many mothers with young children wanted to take part but were restricted because of the lack of adequate childcare.

With support from Crows Nest TAFE *Bound Together* was initiated soon after the *Beginnings* project. New immigrants with young children were reporting that their feelings of isolation were exacerbated due to the restrictions placed on them while caring for young children. Over four weeks both parent and child had the opportunity to create their own storybook with support from writer Belinda Nolan. Students from the Child Care Course at TAFE were invited to carry out their required training hours with the children from the project. Parents wrote their stories while children created images to accompany them. The books were shared with the group during the final workshop.

Due to the popularity of the Bound Together project, another course was organised again with support from Crows Nest TAFE. *Recipes for Friendship* invited new immigrants with young children to participate in a series of creative workshops. Childcare was offered with the emphasis on providing a separate space for parents to socialise and to be creative. The parents from an array of different cultural backgrounds were invited to create a booklet that shared their anecdotal stories surrounding their favourite recipes. Although there was much interest from parents, many parents turned out to be accompanying their partners on business visas so could only attend a few workshops. Some parents booked into the course and found they had to return to their country of origin before the project took place. The parents that did complete all the sessions produced a recipe/story book that was well received by the community. The recipes chosen were selected because of the associated memories but the group also reflected that they were chosen bearing in mind the availability of ingredients. The group acknowledged that many fruit and vegetables from their countries of origin were not easy to find in North Sydney. If Council were to establish any kind of community garden in the future then a section should be allotted to the growing of fruit and vegetables that are not so readily available in North Sydney.

Carnivale is held in conjunction with the North Sydney Noodle Market. Multicultural groups and entertainers are invited to participate in the launch of the Noodle Market which coincides with daylight saving. The event attracts families, young people, workers from the CBD and seniors and is a great opportunity to showcase multicultural cuisine, entertainment and to provide information relevant to people from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Harmony Day is also held to celebrate the cultural diversity within our community.

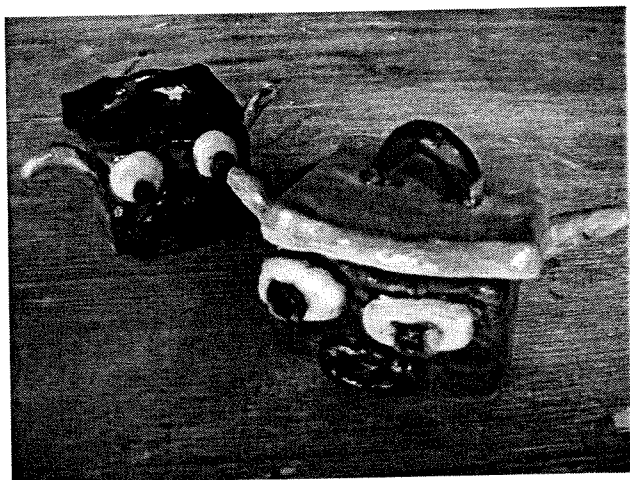
Many **older people** in our community are physically active and able to access a wide range of cultural events. Council and its centres provide a substantial Seniors Week calendar of events, which encourage older people to be fit and active in their community. All event publicity is widely distributed to seniors groups, nursing homes, day care units and retirement villages.

Older people also make up a large proportion of volunteers in North Sydney, and without their support, many Council cultural activities/events could not happen. Council pays tribute to its volunteers at the Volunteer Function and the Australia Day Community Awards which are held annually.

Consultations confirm however that a great many older people remain isolated in our community, and find it difficult to access activities/event because of physical disabilities, lack of knowledge about these activities/events, or difficulty accessing transport. The Easy Rider bus, which picks up from pre-designated stops for a small donation operates twice weekly but is heavily booked. Door to event transport is preferable to assist older people and people with disabilities accessing events, but this can be costly. One way to alleviate the access issue is to organise more events to take place at venues already utilised by older people i.e. nursing homes and day care facilities, however older people isolated in their own homes still remains an issue.

In 2008 Council will release a Public Art DVD that enables the viewer to appreciate the various public art works around North Sydney, both old and new. The viewer can also ascertain the kind of access each public art site has. If the viewer determines the site is too difficult to negotiate physically, then they can still have some experience and understanding of the work via the DVD.

Council needs to ensure their events and facilities are free or kept at a minimal cost so that all community members are able to participate/use, including carers and their dependants. The problem of charges for carers assisting older people when using cultural facilities is the same as for those with disabilities: the perception of the costs being double acts as a deterrence to involvement.



Potting with Pimm, Creating Wellbeing Program, 2007



Seniors Week, 2007

**Swot Analysis:** Cultural activities and support for people with disabilities, older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Council continues to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in all activities and events as well as the event organisation and delivery.</li> <li>➤ Ongoing arts program that promotes creativity, self-expression and wellbeing.</li> <li>➤ Council has supported several arts projects through the Crows Nest Centre with the aim of reducing reported isolation experienced by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>➤ All event publicity is widely distributed to seniors groups, nursing homes, day care units and retirement villages.</li> <li>➤ Access to cultural facilities and events improved</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reaching isolated community members not linked with support services continues to be a problem.</li> <li>➤ Many older people remain isolated, finding it difficult to access activities/events because of physical disabilities, lack of knowledge about these activities/events, or difficulty accessing transport.</li> <li>➤ People of diverse backgrounds report the lack of availability of fruit and vegetables readily used in their cooking.</li> <li>➤ Many people from culturally diverse backgrounds are only in the area for a short period of time</li> <li>➤ Many older people, people with disabilities and their carers unable to participate in fitness programs because cost and accessibility is prohibitive</li> <li>➤ Limited access to Nutcote and Primrose Park Art &amp; Craft Centre</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet with Nursing Homes, Day Centres and Retirement Villages in order to better deliver programs and information</li> <li>➤ Utilize Home Library Service to reach isolated community members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NIL</li> </ul>

**Intent:** Provide cultural activities and support for people with disabilities, older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

**Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Council Officers need to continue promoting programs such as Creating Wellbeing directly to communities where members are reporting social isolation. This needs to be done at a grass roots level and on a regular basis.
- Council needs to ensure their events and facilities are free or kept at a minimal cost so that all community members are able to participate/use, including carers and their dependants.
- Council will investigate community garden options, with the aim of including a ‘cultural garden’.
- Council will explore ways to improve its facilities for all people with disabilities.
- Council to investigate opportunities to create a ‘Keep Fit’ DVD for people with Disabilities

**Identified Needs**

- Reaching and supporting socially isolated community members not already linked with services.
- More door to event transport needs to be made available for older people and people with disabilities



## • Parking and Transport

The North Sydney area is well served for public transport, with buses, trains and ferries operating regularly. Lack of parking at cultural venues has been highlighted as an issue, especially for families with young children, older people and people with physical disabilities, although this problem needs to be balanced with the needs of local residents. Luna Park is an example of parking being provided near the site but not used because of affordability issues. However Council's car parks in Ridge Street and Crows Nest which are close to cultural venues are well patronized. Primrose Park Art & Craft Centre also has good parking facilities, although the centre is not so well served by public transport.

### Swot Analysis: Parking and Transport

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Council offers concise public transport and walking track information via community flyers and Council's homepage.</li> <li>➤ Council car parks in Ridge Street, Crows Nest and Primrose Park are close to cultural venues</li> <li>➤ Lower North Shore Community Transport is a support service offering transport assistance to people with disabilities, frail older people and their carers.</li> <li>➤ 12 seater bus, Easy Rider, offering assistance to people with disabilities and frail older people with transport problems.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Substantial parking is not available near many Council facilities. This makes access difficult for families with young children, older people and people with physical disabilities.</li> <li>➤ The 12 seater bus, Easy Rider offers limited trips and is heavily booked.</li> <li>➤ The Easy Rider bus does not generally offer door to door transport</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NIL</li> </ul>

**Intent:** Provide parking and transport

### Strategies to be maintained and developed

- Council will continue to include parking and transport information on all Council flyers publishing community events.

### Identified Needs

- More door to event transport needs to be made available for older people and people with disabilities.

● **Range of cultural activities/events - information & promotion**

Council provides a wide variety of cultural events throughout the year as outlined in this document. These events are promoted through a multiplicity of formats: the homepage, an annual What's On, a Public Art guide, as well as the quarterly North Sydney News and a turnover of 65 community noticeboards every six weeks. Stanton Library and community events are also good sources of information distribution. However the cost of advertising is prohibitive and it is often difficult to gain editorial space in local papers. Reaching isolated community members continues to be a problem.

**Swot Analysis:** Range of cultural activities/events – information and promotion

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wide variety of cultural events</li> <li>➤ 65 Community Noticeboards</li> <li>➤ North Sydney News</li> <li>➤ Website</li> <li>➤ What's On/Public Art Guide sent out to venues and community groups</li> <li>➤ Stanton Library has a large volume of customers seeking information</li> <li>➤ Community events are a good way to distribute information</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited staff resources</li> <li>➤ Reaching isolated community members not linked with support services continues to be a problem.</li> <li>➤ Advertising costs are expensive</li> <li>➤ Gaining editorial space in the Mosman Daily is difficult</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Utilize Home Library Service in distributing information to isolated community members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NIL</li> </ul>

**Intent:** Provide a range of cultural activities/events – information and promotion

**Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Council will continue to utilise all free advertising sources with regular issue of press releases and promotion of events through Council's website, community radio, banners, community noticeboards, Stanton Library and community events.
- Council needs to develop a strategy that ensures information reaches isolated communities.
- Council to continue to inform Nursing Homes, Retirement Villages and Day Centres about events/activities taking place
- Prioritise the annual program of cultural events by reviewing service levels on an annual basis

**what's  
2008on**

## ● Inclusion of art in public spaces

Since 2004 Council has actively sought to encourage the installation of public art in the area. A full inventory of public art in North Sydney has been compiled by Council's Arts Team in the form of a database, accessible over the internet and in print.

Council's Art Team has been responsible for several small scale public art projects outside the CBD including the inclusion of works in playgrounds as well as commissioned works to celebrate the Guringai Festival in 2005 & 2006. Local artist Karen Atkins was commissioned by Council to create several works in Grasmere Park's children's playground. The sculptures work visually, as they are aesthetically inviting, while also encouraging textile interaction and play. Council aims to continue the commissioning of public sculptures that encourage public interaction and sensory experience on many levels.

Local and Indigenous artist Shane Haurama was commissioned to create *Manubada Haurama and Abia Haurama* to celebrate the Guringai Festival in 2005. The sculptures of a fisherman and woman in the style of figures from the Torres Strait were installed in Kesterton Park at the eastern end of High Street, Neutral Bay. Although Shane Haurama had many successful exhibitions of his work this was his first attempt at a large scale public work. Council also commissioned Shane to produce an artwork as part of Council's commitment to the Reconciliation process and Jessica Birk was invited to do the artwork for the *Hope Tree* Reconciliation event and subsequent booklet.

In 2006 Indigenous and local artist, Tim Moriarty in collaboration with Balaringi was commissioned to create *Message Sticks* to celebrate the Guringai Festival and the renaming of Raleigh Street Plaza to Cammeraygal Place. Moriarty used his work *Message Sticks* to represent the story of the Cammeraygal People.

North Sydney Community Centre and the Crows Nest Centre have both been given donations to provide community art murals within close proximity to their buildings.

Council must maintain its levels of appropriate departmental and staff support to young and emerging artists if it is to continue attracting such artists to public art commissions. Provision for staffing costs must continue to be addressed in public art budgets.

Aboriginal art and culture is fundamental to North Sydney's cultural heritage. This has been recorded in Council's core publications: *Aboriginal North Sydney* (2007), and its ongoing Art Policies. This standpoint has already resulted in significant additions to North Sydney 'gallery' collections, public art and cultural events.

Council's major strategies for achieving better public art outcomes, conscious of the enormous financial costs involved, have been:

- Development of a Public Art Development Control Plan to guide private development of the creation of high quality art.
- Development of Public Art Policy.
- Installation of public art in playgrounds through a community development process.
- Commencement of a "small scale public art in the CBD" program.

One problem in the provision of public art in the North Sydney area is that it is difficult to attract funding from State and Federal Government Arts bodies, as most arts projects are funded in perceived socially isolated and low income areas such as the western suburbs of Sydney.

Council's art collection is centered in the North Sydney Heritage Centre whose collections are increasingly available on line for research purposes through Council's homepage. They include, large pictures, photographs, public art and costumes. The collections have been most influenced by the Library's collection development policy, which has emphasized historical importance, and the fact that the North Sydney Art Prize is a non acquisitive competition. Since 2000 however a small annual budget has been set aside to acquire works (mostly from the Art Prize) which have artistic merit independent of their historical context. Council has a system of climate controlled storage for its artwork and has a program of preservation and display to enable these works to be enjoyed by the community in perpetuity. Nevertheless, over the years Council has acquired many donated artworks which do not fit the criteria of the Acquisition Policy and a De-acquisition Policy is required for disposal of the work. This will allow more room for new work to be purchased.



Tim Moriarty public art, *Message Sticks* commissioned to celebrate the Guringai Festival and the renaming of Raleigh Street Plaza to Cammeraygal Place

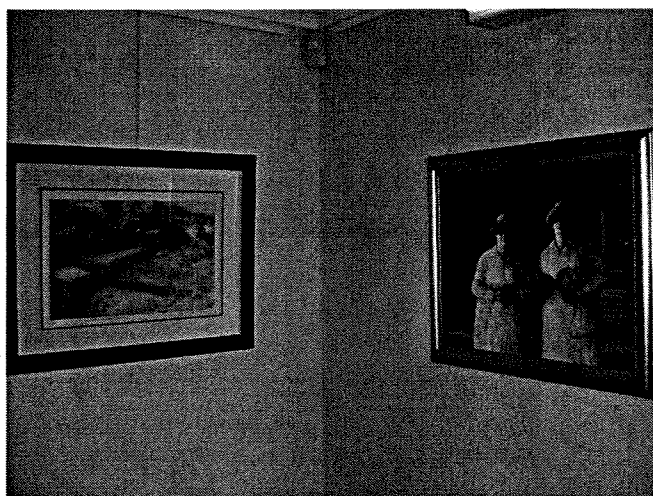
## Swot Analysis: Inclusion of art in public spaces

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Since 2004 Council has worked consistently at establishing new public arts projects</li><li>➤ Large collection of artworks</li><li>➤ Collection online and in print for research</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Unsuccessful in attracting funds from Arts Councils and external funding bodies.</li><li>➤ Limited funds for staff to execute public art commissions.</li><li>➤ Limited storage space</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ In 2008 and beyond small-scale public arts projects will start to take place in the CBD.</li><li>➤ Review acquisition policy to allow for de-acquisition of work</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ NIL</li></ul>

**Intent:** To enable the inclusion of art in public spaces

### Strategies to be maintained and developed

- Council aims to commission public sculptures that promote public interaction and work on many different sensory levels.
- Council aims to attract emerging artists by offering appropriate departmental and staff support. Provision for staffing costs will be addressed in public art budget allocations.
- Council will continue to collect historical and aesthetically pleasing works to build up their collection and rotate the present collection on a yearly basis both for the benefit of the community and the preservation of artworks.
- Council will arrange a de-acquisition of unwanted work



Artworks displayed in the Executive offices of Council

### **3. To address issues arising from the North Sydney Council's Social Plan 2008-2011. (Pages - )**

*An affluent society such as ours, yet one that is living much longer and increasingly multicultural, will often allow our evident material comfort to mask private unhappiness or even distress. Symptoms of such dislocation include loneliness, poor mental health, unacceptable pressure at school and in the workplace, and cultural alienation.*

The following issues have been identified as social needs that can or have been addressed through cultural activities and events. Further details are outlined in the Social Plan.

#### **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- **There are significant numbers of domestic violence offences and sexual assaults**
- **Alcohol, tobacco and drugs pose significant health and social problems, especially to young people**

#### **HEALTH & WELLBEING**

- **There are large numbers of socially isolated and vulnerable people**
- **Many people experience high levels of stress**
- **Many people have unhealthy diets and do not do enough exercise, particularly children and young people.**

#### **WORKING, LEARNING AND VOLUNTEERING**

- **There is a lack of coordination of local volunteers**
- **There are barriers affecting local community groups e.g. insurance and venue hire costs**

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

- **There are significant numbers of domestic violence offences and sexual assaults**

**Intent:** To alleviate the effects of domestic violence offences and sexual assaults

### **Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Hold workshops for young people from youth refuges in order to create a booklet to assist young people find strategies to cope with violence and assaults

- **Alcohol, tobacco and drugs pose significant health and social problems, especially to young people**

**Intent:** To encourage alcohol, tobacco and drug free events and promote healthy lifestyle and social interaction between young people

### **Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Council holds the annual Shoreshocked Festival which gives young people the opportunity to meet and experience a range of recreational activities to encourage a healthy lifestyle



Shoreshocked, 2007

## HEALTH AND WELL BEING

- **There are large numbers of socially isolated and vulnerable people**

**Intent:** To keep socially isolated and vulnerable people informed of Council events and activities and to encourage participation in a diverse range of cultural activities

### Strategies to be maintained and developed

- What's On and Public Art Guide/DVD to be distributed through Home Library Service & Lower North Shore Community Transport
- Council holds annual Seniors Week events to encourage active participation and social interaction between people of all ages. Nursing Homes, Retirement Villages and Day Centres are targeted
- Council operates up to 10 Wellbeing Creative Workshops per annum for people experiencing mental health problems
- Council holds annual Harmony Day and Carnivale events to encourage people from CALD backgrounds and the community to interact and celebrate cultural differences
- Council participates in the annual Guringai Festival in order to break down barriers and better expose the community to Indigenous heritage and culture
- Council operates the 'Men's Shed' to give older people and people with mental health problems the opportunity to meet new people and learn new skills.
- Council delivers a program of public art to beautify public parks, playgrounds and harsh environments in the CBD, thus giving the community the opportunity to feel a sense of place and connection to the area



Community painting a mural at the North Sydney Community Centre, 2008



- **Many people experience high levels of stress**

**Intent:** To alleviate stress in the community

**Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Council holds an annual Mental Health Week event and the community are better informed about stress prevention.
- Council supports the development of the “Well Being Centre” at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre/Bowlo at Milson’s Point where the community are given access to a range of wellbeing services and stress prevention activities.
- Council will continue to provide the North Sydney Art Prize to encourage amateur and professional artists and the community to benefit from the effects of art in relieving stress and inspiring the spirit
- Council to explore ways of involving more young people in the North Sydney Art Prize, so that they can have an outlet for their creative expression and increase self-esteem and a sense of belonging to the community
- Page to Stage provides young people with a vehicle to explore issues affecting their lives.
- Council offers the Tibetan Monks free access to the Hutley Hall as required and invites local schools and the community to experience the Tibetan Culture, meditation and the making of a sand mandala.



Tibetan Monks and Sand Mandala, Hutley Hall, 2007

- **Many people have unhealthy diets and do not do enough exercise, particularly children and young people**

**Intent:** To encourage healthy diets and exercise, particularly for children and young people

### **Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Council participates in a gardening program for children at the Coal Loader site
- Council participates in a gardening program for women from CALD backgrounds at the Coal Loader site
- Council develops an exercise DVD for people with disabilities
- Council develops a skate park to encourage active participation by young people
- Council offers the Children's Festival and Community Carols events to promote healthy lifestyle and recreational activities for children and families.



Children's Festival, 2007



Healthy eating fruit, 2007

## **WORKING, LEARNING AND VOLUNTEERING**

- **There is a lack of coordination of local volunteers**

**Intent:** To bring together and recognise local volunteers

### **Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Council holds an annual Volunteers function and Australia Day Awards so that volunteers are recognized for their contribution to the community.

- **There are barriers affecting local community groups e.g. insurance and venue hire costs**

**Intent:** To support community groups

### **Strategies to be maintained and developed**

- Council to continue to support community groups through the community donations and sports development fund.



Volunteers Function at Molly Dive Function Centre, 2007

## Profile of the North Sydney community

The North Sydney Council Local Government area, covering 10 sq. kilometres, incorporates a Central Business District (CBD) for commercial use and two high-density mixed-use centres (St Leonards and Milsons Point).

There are also established and emerging main streets, and diverse residential areas, in which 86% of the population (which the Preliminary Estimated Residential Population for 2006 gives as 61,401) is over the age of 18. While 42% are in registered or de facto marriages, 20% (twice the Sydney Statistical Division's [SSD] average) live alone. The population may be described as wealthy, with over 35% earning more than \$1000 per week, (compared to the SSD's 14.7%) but it's notable that more than 26% earn less than \$500 per week.

The population is highly mobile. Nearly half of all residents rent and, over a five-year period, over 65% move to a new address. The dwelling density is higher than in most other parts of Sydney and is increasing. 71% of residents live in medium-density housing (units, townhouses, semis and terraces) compared to the SSD's 29%.

North Sydney has the same proportion of persons aged over 65 years (11.4%) as the rest of Sydney, but a larger proportion, creating a so-called "Christmas tree" shape, of young adults aged 25 to 39 years (36% compared to SSD's 30%). While 33% of North Sydney residents were born overseas, half of these are from English speaking countries. 14% speak a language other than English at home, with the largest groups speaking Japanese, Cantonese or Mandarin, with Chinese the most popular at a combined 4.5%, followed by Japanese at 3.1%. The indigenous community is low in numbers (97 persons).

North Sydney has a high level of daytime visitors - some 63,345 people travel to North Sydney for work, and of the 15,000 students attending schools and tertiary institutions, only one in five lives in the area. The most frequently declared religion is Christianity (57%) with the next most popular (Buddhism, at 2.5%) being outnumbered by those declaring no religious affiliation (20%).

The principal commercial activities in the North Sydney CBD, one of the largest in Australia, employ 63,345 persons in the following industries: property and business (38%); finance and insurance (10%); Communications (7%); retail (6%); manufacturing (5%) and, all at 4%, accommodation, cafes and restaurants; health and community services; wholesale trade; and education. At the 2001 Census unemployment was a low 3.5%, compared with SSD's at 6.1%

Potential developable land over the next 10 years is expected to bring an additional 6,545 residents and 11,306 workers to the North Sydney community. The proportion of the population over 65 years is expected to rise by 5.2% by the year 2022. The current residential population is an increase of 5.1% since 1996 and 12% since 1991. At certain times of the year and for special events tens of thousands of people travel to North Sydney to watch boat races by day, fireworks by night, or to simply picnic by the Harbour. Monthly markets, in three locations throughout North Sydney, as well as Christmas, Youth Week and other festival events, attract thousands more to the civic parks and main streets. North Sydney's major facilities (the Olympic Pool, Stanton Library, North Sydney Oval and the Indoor Sports Centre) as well as its parks and playgrounds, attract still more again.

A survey of children's activities in the 12 months to April 2000 found that 777,700 children (29%) were involved in at least one of four selected organised cultural activities outside of school hours. Girls were twice as likely as boys (40% compared with 20%) to participate in at least one of these activities.

During the year, 10% of girls were involved in more than one of the selected organised cultural activities outside of school hours, compared with 3% of boys.

The rate of children's participation in at least one of the organised cultural activities ranged from 22% in the Northern Territory to 34% in the Australian Capital Territory.

Playing a musical instrument was the most popular of the selected cultural activities (18%), followed by dancing (10%), singing (5%) and drama (5%). The activity with the highest ratio of girls to boys was dancing, with 11 times more girls participating than boys.

*North Sydney attendances at cultural venues or engaging in cultural activities:*

<i>CINEMAS</i>	<i>Audience</i>
<b>Cremorne Orpheum</b>	<b>420,000 pa</b>
<b>Starlight Cinema</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<i>FESTIVALS</i>	<i>Attendances</i>
<b>Gourmet Food Fair</b>	
<b>Celtic Festival</b>	<b>5,000</b>
<b>Crows Nest Fair</b>	<b>40,000</b>
<b>Neutral Bay Fair</b>	<b>5,000</b>
<b>North Sydney Children's Festival</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>Events in Parks</b>	
<b>New Years Eve</b>	<b>100,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>per annum</b>

<i>GALLERIES</i>	<i>Visitors</i>
<b>Finks</b>	<b>75,000pa</b>
<b>Hilton Hordern</b>	<b>4,000pa</b>
<b>Joan's Ridge Street</b>	<b>13,000pa</b>
<b>McGraths</b>	<b>8,000pa</b>
<b>Royal Art Society</b>	<b>5,000pa</b>
<b>Salmon Galleries</b>	<b>8,000pa</b>
<b>Aquarelle</b>	
<b>Changeable Art Space</b>	<b>2,500pa</b>
<b>Marianne Newman</b>	<b>10,000pa</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<i>LIBRARIES</i>	<i>Loans/attendances</i>
<b>Stanton</b>	<b>680, 500 loans</b>
<b>Writers at Stanton</b>	<b>5,000 attend</b>
<b>Storytime/children's activities</b>	<b>5,500 attend</b>
<b>Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre</b>	<b>1,000 loans</b>

<i>MARKETS</i>	<i>Stalls per month</i>
<b>Crows Nest Markets</b>	
<b>Kirribilli Markets</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Northside Produce Markets</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>North Sydney Markets</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>North Sydney Noodle Market</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Kirribilli Art &amp; Design Market</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<i>MUSEUMS</i>	<i>Visitors</i>
<b>Donbank and the Sextons Cottage</b>	<b>1,665</b>
<b>Nutcote</b>	<b>7,000</b>
<b>Mary Mackillop</b>	<b>18,808</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<i>MUSIC</i>	<i>Audience</i>
<b>Classical Guitar Society</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>The Marais Project</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>North Sydney Symphony Orchestra</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>Sydney Jazz Club (Berry Island)</b>	<b>1,200</b>
<b>Mandolin Orchestra</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Mount Street Plaza entertainment</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<i>THEATRES</i>	<i>Audience</i>
<b>Ensemble</b>	<b>86,000</b>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>45,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>per week</b>

<i>FUN PARKS</i>	<i>Attendances</i>
<b>Luna Park</b>	

*(c) North Sydney cultural activities - participants:*

<i>Peak Community Centres</i>	<i>Students attending classes</i>
<b>Crows Nest Centre</b>	
<b>Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>North Sydney Community Centre</b>	<b>2,000</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	
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<i>DANCE GROUPS</i>	<i>Students attending classes</i>
Arthur Murray	150 per week
Flamencology	40 per week
Neutral Bay School	170 per week
North Shore Dance	200 per week
SCECGS Redlands	140 per week
Tanya Pearson	100 per week
Centrestage Academy	200 per week
Mango Dance Centre	
All Stars Performing Arts	300 per week
Salsa Republic	200 per annum
Early Dance Consort	40 per annum
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<i>DRAMA</i>	<i>Students attending classes/performances</i>
Ensemble Studios	30 per annum
Young Dramatists	100 per annum
Actors Forum	750 per annum
Shakespeare on the Green	1,000 per annum
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<i>ARTS GROUPS</i>	
Royal Art Society of NSW	700 students per annum
Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre	150 regular users per annum
Primrose Gallery & Studio Space	10 exhibitions per annum
Hutley Hall Exhibition space	3 exhibitions per annum
Don Bank Museum	4 exhibitions per annum
<b>TOTAL</b>	per annum