
Gladstone Region Cultural Planning Workshop Final Report

Introduction

In 2009 and 2010 extensive consultation with the Gladstone community was undertaken to canvass cultural issues and identify key cultural development priorities. This process resulted in a DRAFT GLADSTONE REGION ARTS AND CULTURAL POLICY.

On Saturday 3rd December 2011 a further workshop was convened by Di Paddick Cultural Projects Officer from the Gladstone Regional Council to review the Draft Policy with view to finalising the document. Present at the workshop were nine members of the Gladstone region who represented a range of cultural organisations and interests.

On Saturday 3 March 2012 another workshop with representatives of the arts and cultural community was convened to complete the review.

This report outlines the process that was conducted over the two days and represents a summary of the outcomes which resulted from the discussion.

Background

The draft Arts & Cultural Policy was developed in the context of the State Government's regional arts development strategy: *artbeat: Regional Arts and Culture Strategy 2010-2014*. At around the same time that the draft policy was being developed, Council was also consulting on and developing its Community Plan. The Community Plan takes into account other plans and planning processes that were around at the time including:

- Social Infrastructure Strategic Plan (SISP)
- Prosperity 2030: Gladstone Region Economic Development Strategy (GREDS)
- Our Place Our Plan (a discussion paper for a new planning scheme)
- Gladstone Region Wellbeing Study (by the Hornery Institute)

It is not known if the Draft Arts & Cultural Policy was considered in the development of the Community Plan.

Workshop Purpose

The primary purpose of the cultural planning workshop was to review the draft cultural plan in the context of Community Plan and associated planning documents, re-establish cultural development priorities and develop actions that can be taken forward into Council's annual business planning processes.

Workshop Objectives

- Review the planning context, linkages and implications
- Review the draft arts & cultural plan and strategic priorities
- Develop actions for key strategic priorities
- Recommend implementation, monitoring and review process

Workshop Agenda

- Where are we now?
 - Review of the current situation
- Who is this plan for?
 - Identification of audience/s
- Where would we like to be?

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- Vision and goals
 - How do we get there?
 - Identification of key strategies
 - How do we make sure we get there?
 - Implementation, monitoring and review
 - How do we know if we got there?
 - Evaluation

Process & Outcome

At the beginning of the first workshop, after general introductions and a preview of the day's activities, it transpired that only one person present had been a part of the earlier consultation process that resulted in the initial draft plan. It was generally agreed therefore that as nobody present felt connected to the draft plan or had any understanding of its background, it would be best to begin the planning process afresh, referring to the draft plan where necessary and relevant.

In the second workshop, of the twelve people present only four had participated in the previous workshop. This necessitated a full review of initial proceedings and outcomes before progress could be made.

Where are we now?

This segment began with an overview of the planning hierarchy and compared and contrasted the vision statements and strategic themes contained in the Community Plan, the Draft Arts and Cultural Plan, and the Arts Queensland Regional Arts Strategy. The group also reviewed the cultural services currently being delivered by Council and the actions outlined in the Community Plan under the heading: **Topic 5: Valuing History, Culture and Creativity**

Who is this plan for?

The group acknowledged that an Arts and Cultural plan should be for the whole of the region and specifically cited the following special groups:

- Council areas across the whole region
- Senior Citizens and the Aged
- Families
- Young People
- Indigenous Australians
- Australians from other cultures
- Disability groups
- Financially challenged
- Gender equality

Where would we like to be?

In approaching the development of a vision statement the group first reviewed the vision statements contained in the Community Plan, the Draft Arts and Cultural Plan and the Regional Arts Development plan. After thought and discussion the group agreed on a number of core elements of a revised Vision for the Cultural Plan, encapsulated in the following Statement:

The Gladstone Region values the arts as an integral part of the culture and well being of the whole community. It brings us together and embraces the core values of diversity, inclusiveness, creativity and balance.

How do we get there?

Following the establishment of the core elements of the vision and with further reference to the three planning documents, the group discussed and agreed upon key strategic themes and goal statements.

In the second workshop the group considered, discussed and agreed upon the objects or action oriented objectives that underpin the goals e.g.

- Strategic Theme
 - Goal
 - Objects or action statements
- Cultural Diversity
 - We acknowledge and celebrate our cultural diversity
 - Review and document the scope of cultural diversity in the region and how this is currently represented and expressed through the arts
 - Identify opportunities to enhance the inclusion and promotion of the cultural diversity of the region in current community events, festivals and arts programs
 - Promote the inclusion of a range of arts activities in local events and festivals
 - Identify and support new opportunities that express and celebrate the cultural diversity of the region
 - Explore and develop opportunities for cultural exchange through the Sister City program
- Creative, Spaces and Places
 - We have accessible, affordable and appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces and places for engaging with and the appreciation of arts practice, presentation and performance
 - Review current arts/cultural infrastructure in the region and how it is used
 - Undertake a cultural/arts infrastructure needs analysis across the region for current and future use
 - Optimise the use of current spaces and places and identify new/alternative spaces and places that could be used for arts/cultural activities
 - Investigate the use of existing heritage buildings for arts/cultural activities
 - Develop a cultural/arts infrastructure plan that addresses current and future needs of the region including short, medium and long term goals
 - Develop a policy and guidelines for an annual Artist in Residence Program
 - Progress the development of a Public Art Policy ensuring that it connects with the Cultural Policy and Community Plan
 - Seek clarification and resolution of public liability insurance issues
- Communication, Coordination & Collaboration
 - We have effective cross-sector and cross-region communication and work together collaboratively
 - Review current cross-sector and cross-region on-line and off-line communication practices in the region and optimise awareness, involvement and use by the cultural/arts sector and enhance resources and practices where needed and appropriate
 - Collectively lobby established commercial media for a greater share of voice for the arts
 - Ensure the availability and accessibility of an up-to-date arts and cultural network directory and events calendar

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- Encourage and facilitate networking opportunities and establish an annual networking event to promote awareness, communication and collaboration amongst artists and arts entities in the region
 - Actively seek and support opportunities for cross-sector and cross region collaboration
 - Establish a steering committee or nodal point to coordinate upstream and downstream communications regarding the implementation and monitoring of the cultural plan
 - Appoint a cultural representative to the Council's Community Reference Group and Community Plan Coordination Group
 - Conduct an annual review of the implementation of the cultural plan with the steering committee and representatives of the arts/cultural sector and council
- Participation & Engagement
 - We have opportunities for all members of the community to participate and actively engage in activities, according to their interests, abilities and aspirations
 - Provide ready online and off-line access to up to date information about cultural/arts activities and associated clubs and associations
 - Widely promote existing opportunities for participation in arts and cultural activities
 - Research and document cultural/arts needs and interests not currently catered for in the region
 - Actively promote opportunities for participation in arts and cultural activities through the Council's Welcome Program and other Council communications methods
 - Research, identify and support opportunities for all sectors of the community to engage with and express themselves through arts/cultural activities including young people, senior citizens, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities et al
 - Support and promote the appreciation and practice of arts and culture in schools
- History & Heritage
 - We have a strong sense of our heritage and actively protect and conserve our history and unique identity
 - Support and promote the ongoing development of heritage programs for example the 'Our Priceless Past' project
 - Develop and support projects that enable the preservation and promotion of our history and heritage and the collection and sharing of our stories
 - Continue to provide adequate support and resources to sustain and develop the activities of the Regional Gallery and Museum
 - Actively promote the need to conserve and preserve historical buildings and landmarks
 - Establish and promote a Heritage Trail for the use of visitors and residents
- Human & Financial Resources
 - The arts are well resourced financially and supported by Council, business and a skilled, enthusiastic group of workers and volunteers
 - Identify the training and skills development needs of artists, artworkers and arts clubs and associations

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- Develop and support creative training and skills development programs for artists
 - Develop and support arts business training and skills development programs for artists, artworkers and arts groups and organisations
 - Develop a cohesive, united approach to solicit ongoing and sufficient support for the arts from Council, Government and industry
 - Actively seek arts partnerships with the business and corporate sector
 - Promote the availability and value of membership of and volunteering for arts and cultural groups and organisations
 - Identify and promote the availability of arts and cultural funding opportunities
 - Maintain and develop the RADF program

In the first workshop the group was asked to prioritise the strategic themes and goals. After discussion the group agreed that each area was important and whilst it may be possible to prioritise some of the objects or actions arising, all themes and goals should be pursued with equal value.

How do we make sure we get there?

Much discussion ensued in relation to the challenge of taking the results of the planning process forward. Integral to this discussion was the need to link the outcomes of the cultural plan into Council planning and budgeting processes and the importance of disseminating information back to the myriad of arts and cultural organisations and interest groups.

It was agreed that the best mechanism to present a united voice to Council and to link back to the community was to establish an Arts and Cultural Reference and Advisory Group. This group would be responsible for advocating for the adoption of the cultural plan, taking actions forward through Council planning processes – especially the Community Plan Coordination Group and the Community Reference Group – and to communicate back to the various arts, cultural and interest groups. It would have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the plan and the processes of review and evaluation. It was proposed to the group and it was generally agreed, that the Gladstone Arts Council was best placed and willing to take on this advocacy and coordinating role.

How do we know if we got there?

Some discussion was had regarding monitoring and evaluation and it was generally agreed that once the plan was completed and an implementation process was underway, there would need to be an annual review of progress by the cultural community, concurrent with Council's annual planning processes. Details of monitoring and review would need to enshrine in the final plan.

Conclusion

The two full days of planning were intensive, enjoyable and productive. While it was difficult to get a consistent group of people to work on the plan over time, this process and the processes which preceded it have resulted in the framework of a cultural plan that can be said to satisfactorily represent the view and aspiration of the arts and cultural sector in the Gladstone region. Once the draft has been distributed for final input and comment, the Gladstone Region will have a roadmap to guide the appreciation, promotion and development of arts and culture in the region, now and into the future.

Stephen Clark
Sunday, 4 March 2012