

1. Arts and Cultural Development

2. Contributors

Roberta Bonnin, Neal Price, Andrew Harvey, Glenys Ismail, Jennifer Slattery, Courtney Gillott, Emma Bain, Angela Wright, Jan Haughton, Danielle Wegmann.

3. Issue Definition and Scope

This issues paper is based on the following defining inputs:

- Council's current cultural mapping project which is stage I in the development of a Redlands cultural plan
- Internal and external focus groups
- Meetings with arts practitioners and education sector
- Review of cultural facilities studies
- Contextual overview of government cultural policy

Council's support for arts and cultural practice has created a strong localised community culture. The Shire is now in a position to identify and articulate the needs of a growing arts industry seeking professional and commercial opportunities and a range of amateur community based groups who seek engagement and skill development in various art form activities. Cultural mapping has informed Council of the strengths and opportunities that exist in the community. The challenge for Council is to locate resources and implement initiatives to celebrate and assist the exciting range of arts and cultural activities that are available in the Redlands.

Creative and culturally strong communities are characterised by wellbeing indicators which include the following examples:

- Access to cultural facilities and community cultural activities
- Learning skills and problem solving
- Attendance by young people in music, art, drama and dance classes
- Lower levels of antisocial behaviour through young people's participation in cultural programs
- Public and private financial support per person for arts organisations
- Updated and championed arts, culture and heritage policies
- Attendances at cultural heritage sites
- Number of persons employed in cultural industries sector

4. Executive Summary

Redland Shire is an active community with the distinctive features of a unique Indigenous and settler cultural heritage and a contemporary culture reflective of the current population in the region. Cultural development is centrally positioned as a key strategic objective for SEQ's growth management. It provides opportunities to develop cross-sectoral policy initiatives and innovative program collaboration which nurture commercial and community growth, enliven liveability, and build a sense of place in the region.

The benefit of Council's current policy initiatives has been to create a strong grass – roots community culture which will support a shared vision of creating new cultural facilities and promoting recognition of the investment that council has made to community health and well being.

Key themes are:

The recognition of the importance that individual artists, small businesses with expertise in communications, technology and film play in developing creative industries in Australia.

Maximising the use of the Shire's cultural facilities by local residents and visitors through community cultural development initiatives and an innovative cultural strategy which reflects community and industry priorities

The Redland Art Gallery's re- focus to a model that creates a new relevance centred on summer schools programs, social justice and heritage exhibitions and the provision of commercial retail outlets to further assist artists and craft people in finding expanded markets and tourism opportunities.

The animation of the Shire's library and neighbourhood spaces through the use of technology as a strategy to maximise the Council's role in providing services to a range of residents.

RPAC audience development based on professional, corporate, tertiary education and community partnerships which expand options for realising the capability and capacity of the new venue

A Redlands cultural industry sector will require focused development through infrastructure and strategic planning and improved partnerships between educational institutions, Council, other government training and funding bodies.

The local indigenous community is a self determining community with strong protective attitudes towards issues of culture and heritage. There is increased opportunity to acknowledge and promote the unique cultures that exist within the shire by linking them to community driven cultural tourism strategies.

It makes good business and commercial sense to engage with the youth sector who are seeking new leisure and cultural pursuits

By fostering cultural activity in partnership with regional and community stakeholders Council extends the possibilities for cultural development way beyond the scope of its cultural development budget.

5. Regional Cooperation

National and State policies which reference arts industry and technology can assist Council in setting directions and priorities for the future.

At a national level arts and community cultural development trends have centred on the following strategies:

- Improvements in marketing and education to enhance demand for artistic and cultural products.
- A shift away from traditional approaches to visual arts and performance culture to create growth and build new audiences in the cultural sector.
- The development of creative precincts in metropolitan and regional cities to maximise commercial and cultural opportunities at a local level.
- Currently, music and multi-media art forms are undergoing significant changes in the field and are seen by State and federal funding bodies as critical to building creative industries. These industries have been identified as key economic drivers surpassing more traditional industries in their impact.
- There is increased opportunity to acknowledge and promote the unique cultures that exist within communities by linking them to community driven cultural tourism strategies.

- Developing the local shire brand, lifestyle options and cultural services has assisted to identify regional shires as a destination in their own right and a location desired by local, national and international visitors.
- By fostering cultural activity in partnership with regional and community stakeholders councils will extend the possibilities for cultural development well beyond the scope of their cultural development budgets.

Two main national agencies that play a role in the development of creativity and creative industries are the Australia Council for the Arts and the Department of Communications and Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA).

In 2004 the Australia Council announced a major restructure to its programs and boards situating the Community Cultural Development Board and New Media Boards in a Community Partnerships and InterArts office.

The restructure invites local councils and the CCD field to develop partnerships across state and local government boundaries and to encourage growth in the cultural industries sector.

A recent DCITA Creative Industries Cluster Study demonstrates that music and film post production is undergoing significant changes and is increasingly engaged in the production of digital content and applications. The Australia Council continues to pursue research into artist's income, the role of education in the arts, and broad attitudes of Australians to arts.

These reports recognise the important role individual artists and small businesses play in creative industries in Australia.

The Queensland Government's Smart State vision was developed in 1998, in a paper titled *Queensland the Smart State – Investing in Science: Research, Education and Innovation*. It sees major funds allocated by the Queensland Government into the development of key industries. Recently, the framework *Creativity is Big Business* was designed to complement and interact with numerous existing policies and programs such as those dealing with film, communications and technology.

These National and State Policies which reference arts industry and technology can assist Council in setting directions and priorities for the future.

Moreton TAFE and Griffith University indicate a strong willingness to partner with Council in creating opportunities for students and the wider community to realise a shared ambition and vision of a creative arts industry in Redland Shire. Access to community infrastructure and cultural services are cited as the initial building blocks when creating opportunities for public performances for much of the multi-arts activity under TAFE's and Griffith's direction.

Other regional shires experience many of the same cultural development issues currently under discussion by Redland Shire. Networking and partnerships on selected cultural projects with Logan, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Noosa Shires will assist in finding creative solutions and will provide impetus in seeking resources from external funding bodies

6. Background/Discussion

Cultural Infrastructure

Redland Shire's diverse community encompasses many arts disciplines, traditions and emerging cultures. Feedback from recent consultation confirms the findings of much of the cultural services scoping and feasibility studies since the last community visioning process for the 2002 – 2006 Corporate Plan. Since that time there has been a strengthening and upgrading of cultural

infrastructure via the construction of several private and public education facilities and the movement of experienced arts practitioners into the Shire.

A common trend for local councils is to develop infrastructure that follows a neighbouring shire or metropolitan centre. However developing the local Shire brand, lifestyle options and high quality cultural services articulates the different qualities available in the Shire, identifies Council as a leader and fosters the development of niche markets and sub cultures to achieve self sufficiency and full participation in the arts. While the geographical closeness to Brisbane offers community members a range of cultural and lifestyle options the challenge for Council is to attract visitors to the Shire by offering unique experiences while also retaining the focus on community cultural development with local audiences and residents.

Redland Shire Council is about to embark on two major new facilities, the Redlands Performing Arts Centre (RPAC) and the Victoria Point Library, in which the region will showcase its cultural capacity and promote the distinctive brand of the local community. These facilities in conjunction with the Art Gallery and existing facilities at Cleveland, Capalaba and on the bay islands are the foundation of Council's cultural portfolio. Such cultural investments need to have both a short term and long term community orientated strategy to successfully maximise the impact they will have on the community.

The Art Gallery

The Redland Art Gallery has achieved a high standard for the Shire. It has strong representation from the visual arts community who identify the gallery as a prestigious site with good credentials. The Gallery's public art initiative has offered the Shire a quality brand. It attracts attention and sends a message of community ownership and civic pride to residents and visitors. In turn this strengthens local identity, sense of place and enriches the cultural life of the community.

For this prestige and goodwill to continue the capacity of the Gallery to attract State and national exhibitions needs to be addressed. RAG is currently unable to meet the criteria of potential lenders' Facilities Reports and is constrained by available workshop, storage and workroom spaces. There is already pressure on Council to find ways of connecting local artist and craftspeople to commercial outlets such as markets, internet sites and tourism opportunities.

An expansion of both physical space and services that better utilise technology and the provision of a commercial retail outlet will parallel models of best practice in some of Australia's metropolitan and regional cities.

The initial development years of establishing the Gallery as a valuable resource has been an internal focused strategy mostly reliant on the community visiting the venue and participating on site. **Reversing the focus of the gallery towards the community while retaining much of its current activity, may in the future create a new relevance centred on summer schools programs, social justice, and heritage or design exhibitions.** The use of multi media and film also expands the role of the gallery towards collaborations with tertiary education facilities and the development of film festivals, photography and multi media events.

These kinds of inclusive programs will also engage disenfranchised groups, disability groups and emerging cultural communities while encouraging them to make their own contributions to the cultural life of the community. For example new Indigenous arts opportunities (commercial and developmental) could be progressed through partnership with the Gallery

This strategy makes the Gallery more accessible, builds a new audience and promotes the Gallery's products in a more effective manner. It may also herald a shift away from traditional approaches to visual arts culture while allowing Council to re-position its current public art and acquisition policies and the way the gallery functions in the community.

Local Practice/Local Enjoyment

The Shire has a number of community spaces, decentralised arts venues, heritage facilities and halls that are currently used for traditional social or artistic development. Several local amateur drama groups see value and security in maintaining their holdings on current facilities rather than taking a financial risk in shifting audiences and resources into a new purpose build venue. Some local drama groups have established loyal audiences and yearly performance programs that are a source of local pride. Their interest is to encourage a refurbishment of the current rehearsal and performance spaces. Local communities and other art form groups also see these venues as central to their activity, providing a marked local flavour to their art form of writing, poetry, film, dance or visual arts. The issues of the increased cost of public indemnity insurances, exclusive use of facilities, governance and Council subsidies are common concerns for community group's intent on continuing their services.

Neighbourhood cultural activity is a direct reflection of the level of civic pride expressed across the region. It is talked about on many of the islands and noted in smaller public areas on the mainland where artists or community representatives have met over a lengthy period. This continuity of community activity assists the realisation of community identify and belonging to a specific place but it must be accompanied with the idea of purposeful activity and shared interests to ensure a positive and creative outlook. Without these qualities the experience of civic or community pride can diminish. The development of creative precincts in other metropolitan and regional cities has maximised commercial, social and cultural activity at a local level.

Despite the decentralisation of the Shire's cultural activities, the promotion of its creative precincts and high levels of community cultural participation will reinforce the public's identification of the Redlands as a vibrant cultural community.

Performing Arts

The status of performance activity in the Shire, while enthusiastic and diverse will only go part of the way to sustain a quality program in the new Redlands Performing Arts Centre (RPAC). Other regional partners and stakeholders must be attracted to ensure a critical mass of activity is available in the Shire for a culture to be truly sustainable.

To ensure that RPAC fulfils its commercial, community and civic functions and has a stimulating performing arts program available to Redland Shire residents, Council will need to address the issue of subsidised community activity, developing an education program and the attraction of touring companies and product. A natural pathway to achieve cultural and business outcomes would be to place an emphasis on youth music opportunities in the new RPAC. **Developing an audience for the RPAC should focus on professional, corporate, tertiary education and community partnerships to expand Council's options for achieving capacity use of the new venue.**

Dance activity in the Shire is one art form that is strongly linked to the youth, multicultural and aged sectors. There is evidence of skilled professional dancers investing in the region and looking for commercial and artistic opportunities to work with youth. They have a capacity to tour product and require quality performing and rehearsal spaces for productions. **Multicultural and aged communities also value their dance and musical heritage and are keen to preserve them through festivals and events in the shire.**

The extent of brass band and choral activity evident in the community offers Council many opportunities for inclusion of local talent in its public performance program of events and celebrations. These groups are generally well managed, financially viable and are positioned to offer the community significant performance opportunities for a range of young and mature musicians. They also provide professional skill development and networking support which is vital for creating a pathway from an amateur to professional status. Dance organisations and the vibrant music sector in the Shire represent art forms which have both a critical mass of quality practitioners and a significant population base in the region. These art forms cross the spectrum of youth, multicultural, general community and aged sectors. Here Council has identified sections of the community who have a vested interest in participating in local culture and supporting Council's in promoting local infrastructure and cultural activity.

Support for these artforms will achieve future industry and audience development for the Shire on the crest of developing the new performing arts venue.

Library Services

The recognition of community cultural activity around the hubs of the Shire's library services at Cleveland and Capalaba and other library facilities leads to enhanced opportunities for clustering cultural and community services in these spaces. Libraries are places where people can come together to take part in a variety of social, recreational, cultural and learning activities. They provide indoor and outdoor spaces, meeting rooms, access to technology and information, general and specialist collections and a sense of local engagement in a safe and welcoming environment. The capacity for the current libraries and the new Victoria Point Library to expand their role as community hubs has been reinforced by research for this issues paper and the findings of the cultural mapping process. Council's Library Services have already identified strategies for involving young people and especially young adults and are planning to develop an innovative teenage space and programs at the VP library.

The role of the libraries together with the Gallery and the community managed museums in their support of older residents of the Shire in partnership with service organisations should be considered in future cultural planning strategies as an opportunity to attract funding from a range of government departments. It is recognised that cultural engagement for older Australians significantly contributes to both formal and informal approaches to life-long education. This has the capacity to reduce isolation, maintain a sense of belonging and community cohesion and address issues of an ageing population.

The animation of the Shire's library spaces and the clustering of activity around these sites will provide Council with an opportunity to showcase and promote much of the local cultural activity of the area while maximising their role in providing services to a range of residents.

There is widespread understanding that the existence of genuine learning communities and skilling via information literacy are strategies which enable greater participation in community and build social cohesion and economic prosperity. Developments in e.learning have built on existing e.delivery partnerships between TAFE and regional communities across Australia This has enhanced future learning capacity and job opportunities in regional and rural communities for mature aged students beginning study, unemployed and single parents disadvantaged by isolation, people needing to overcome the barriers of distance and travel, and has resulted in access to a range of post secondary learning opportunities. Library Services need access to quality information technology in order to meet their own process requirements as well meet contemporary standards of IT provision for a knowledge economy and information literacy now anticipated by members and prospective library users.

The wealth of oral history, historical material and heritage data currently sitting with the Shire's libraries provides quality information on which to base Indigenous and settler heritage trails, research and academic pursuits, local cultural activities and link to aspects of cultural tourism across the region. Amassing this collection to its current status has been undertaken by committed volunteers and directed by passionate Council employees. It is a good example of partnership relationships which have benefits for both Council and community participants. The key to unlocking and value-adding components of the collection and linking the material to other cultural activity is in making it more accessible to the community in a virtual form accessed via the internet; increasing commercial opportunities for its distribution; and in physical exhibitions across the region. The use of this material by artists, writers, performers, musicians and film makers provides opportunities to develop product for creative industry and cultural tourism.

Cultural Industries

The exciting growth of cultural industries developing in the Shire's educational institutions and in local communities has been identified through focus group and educational sector meetings and through the cultural mapping process. To support the development of many of these fledgling industries better links to community infrastructure and the arts sector should be established to ensure that pathways to Vocational Employment and Training and arts industry services become viable and efficient.

In particular, film and animation is experiencing a strong surge of activity amongst students at Moreton TAFE. They have received positive recognition at State and National competitions and utilise local buildings and sites that promote the area. Some initial interest in developing an ongoing Council partnered film festival has also been welcomed at Griffith University and Moreton TAFE.

Visual artists, writers, craft people and performers have indicated difficulties in finding commercial outlets and marketing opportunities to successfully promote their cultural products, skills and expertise. Many who have the resources find opportunities outside of the Shire's boundaries, but for those who are constrained by costs their reliance on local outlets often does not realise strong commercial benefits.

Aural and oral arts such as music, choirs, story telling, poetry and writing also require stronger links to infrastructure that assists in the rehearsal, recording and documentation of these art forms. The phenomena of highly accessible technologies and the emergence of cultural industries such as film and design, recording and radio at a community level has already created an expectation from the community that opportunities will be available for professional quality recording and rehearsal studios.

The Redlands cultural industry sector would be best served by focussed development through infrastructure and strategic planning and improved partnerships between educational institutions, council and other government training and funding bodies.

Indigenous Culture

Council has the opportunity to acknowledge and promote the unique cultures that exist within its communities. The region's Indigenous population and their unbroken habitation of North Stradbroke Island and the mainland establishes a context around which collaborative development could lead to achieving national and international recognition. Similar cultural tourism opportunities in other parts of Australia and New Zealand have realised tremendous commercial, social and cultural benefits for the community.

While Cultural Services and Redlands Tourism have developed and supported cultural trails and workshops on Stradbroke, further cultural planning is in hiatus as Redland Shire Council and the various Indigenous bodies recognised through the NSI Minjerriabah Planning Study and other

Indigenous cultural groups reflect on their vision for the geographical and social environment of the region.

It is difficult to progress the collaboration until core protocols of welcome to land and symbols of acknowledgement of Indigenous culture are incorporated into Council's public cultural practices. This would reflect the model that New Zealand's local and national governments follow to ensure Maori culture is positioned as an integral part of national identity. This strategy is also demonstrated by the Queensland Government in all cultural events under its control.

The local Indigenous community is a self determining community with strong protective attitudes towards issues of culture and heritage; however the groundwork has been laid for Council to undertake further initiatives that support Indigenous cultural activity in the Shire.

Support for selected projects will also assist Council to better engage in creative industries and cultural tourism development in the region and will enable Council to find appropriate and acceptable mechanisms to support indigenous cultural development in the future.

Youth Culture

Young people are active participants in the Redland Eisteddfod. The strength of this cultural training is reflected in the fact that up to 5000 young people perform in dance, music and speech and drama competitions. Redlands has a great opportunity to build on this level of activity by harnessing the skills, energy and commitment displayed by participants and broadening local opportunities for performance, career pathways and audience support.

Over the last five years Council has developed several successful youth festivals which have been well attended by young people in the area. These festivals seeded a number of local music groups and individuals who were empowered to seek opportunities and employment outside the Shire.

Community opinion is sometimes divided when developing youth centred activity, highlighting community complaints about wilful and destructive behaviour. This type of public concern may have dampened Council's commitment to continuing support for youth orientated activity in a more strategic manner. **However, it makes good business and commercial sense to engage with youth markets who are seeking new leisure and cultural pursuits.**

Young people need places to meet and socialise in environments that are safe and that offer programs which encourage self-expression and skills development. There is also evidence of specialised technical personnel returning to the Shire with an enthusiasm for youth focused bands and festivals. Appropriate, culturally-based strategies are critical in assisting young people in making the transition from school to work or to find meaningful roles in the community.

Impact on the Corporate Plan and Challenges for the Future

What mechanisms are available to develop creative communities and industries that will attract creative entrepreneurs to the region?

How will Council best access potential resources offered by local, regional, business, State and Commonwealth partners?

How will Council maximise the effectiveness of its library services to create community hubs that support community cohesion, local identity and life long learning?

How will Council link cultural activity to tourism development strategies?

How will the Cultural Plan stimulate art form based cultures, support local talent, grow community cultural development and align activity and resources between new and existing facilities?

What short term and long term strategies can be developed to assist the Indigenous community and Council to work from a respectful and collaborative perspective?

How could a festivals and events strategy assist the Shire in delivering more effective cultural and social initiatives to the community?

What cultural indicators could Council identify as the best method of evaluating its arts and cultural investment?