



smARTspaces

SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL ARTS & CULTURAL HERITAGE STRATEGY 2010 - 14



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The Shoalhaven holds a rich history of culture, inspiration and artistic endeavour - from the traditional custodians of the Shoalhaven, the people of the Yuin Nation to the legacy of artists who have been inspired by the unique beauty of the region. Shoalhaven City Council officially began in 1979, but it was in 1859-67 that the city was striving to become a municipality and one of the first acts of the city was to build schools of arts in Terara in 1867 and 1871 in Ulladulla - creative and cultural expression have always been inherent in our lives.

Today the City is generously catered for in art places including the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre, Entertainment Centre, the School of Arts, Civic Centres, the Lady Denman Heritage Museum, and a range of vibrant smaller community museums and galleries. Part of the Shoalhaven City Community Strategic Plan is to enhance these and make them places where all citizens and visitors can enjoy.

Council not only recognises its responsibility in developing these places of 'bricks and mortar', but is mindful that we also need to create opportunities in which our

artists and creative people can express themselves, exchange ideas, engage in critical debate and work together to build a strong arts culture for the city.

Arts and our cultural expressions provide the community with the chance to laugh, argue, express our feelings, and provides the catalyst for us to reflect, celebrate, socialise and gain a greater understanding of our sense of self and place.

We see ourselves in the middle of our community reaching out to artists and all citizens who wish to take part in the artistic experience, whether at the entertainment centre or an art gallery. We pride ourselves on working with the communities to realise ideas and concepts for expressive lives. We hope we can realise these lives through our strategy and the activities and events we have surrounding our arts and culture in the city.

Councillor Paul Green
Mayor, Shoalhaven City





FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES & GUIDING STATEMENTS

COUNCIL'S VISION - We will work together in the Shoalhaven to foster a safe and attractive community for people to live, work, stay and play; where sustainable growth, development and environmental protection are managed to provide a unique and relaxed lifestyle.

COUNCIL'S MISSION - To enhance Shoalhaven's strong communities, sustainable environments and smart economy through strategic leadership, good governance, community engagement and innovative use of resources.

The Shoalhaven City Council is underpinned by a strong set of objectives and strategies. These pathways were determined by the Shoalhaven community through an extensive consultation process undertaken in 2009 and were refined and structured to formulate the City's 'Community Strategic Plan - 2020'.

smART spaces aligns the City's Arts & Cultural Heritage Strategy with these broader objectives and incorporates the fundamentals of good governance and Council's core guiding principles to ensure the effective and efficient use of Council's resources to contribute to the community's wellbeing and sustainable development in the region.

The aspirations and priorities identified within the 'Community Strategic Plan' are based on the social justice principles of Equity, Access, Participation and Rights. Council is proactive in its approach to Ecological

Sustainable Development and has used its existing document; 'Guidelines for Integrating the Principles of Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD) Into Shoalhaven City Council Activities' and the Local Government Act to ensure ESD is fully integrated into the guiding plan.

The Shoalhaven's Arts & Cultural Heritage are also contextualised by both state and national peak bodies who provide valuable research and measures which guide the activities in the region.

ARTS NSW aims to foster a spirited arts and cultural environment, which values our artists and our heritage, which builds community, excites our imagination and inspires our future.

THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS' mission is to enrich the lives of Australians and their communities by supporting the creation and enjoyment of the arts.

COUNCIL'S STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE SHOALHAVEN

On the 26 February 2010, Shoalhaven City Council formalised its dedication to the Aboriginal People of the Shoalhaven by adopting a Statement of Commitment - this agreement underpins Council's activities and ensures the Shoalhaven City Council is proactive in building mutually respectful relationships with the Aboriginal Communities of the Shoalhaven.

Shoalhaven City Council recognizes and acknowledges the history and treatment of Aboriginal people in Australia and supports the Reconciliation Australia vision and values. Shoalhaven City Council recognises Aboriginal peoples' valuable contribution made in strengthening and enriching our communities and the heritage of all Australians.

Shoalhaven City Council commits itself to:

- Ensuring local Aboriginal involvement in events and celebrations of significance which respect the dignity and protocols of the local Aboriginal communities
- The ongoing development of strategies to improve and increase the level of participation of local Aboriginal people in the Local Government decision making processes
- Undertake holistic community planning to address wellbeing, employment and social economic or cultural disadvantage experienced by local Aboriginal people in the Shoalhaven
- Ensuring all council staff and Councillors are exposed to ongoing education and cultural training and development programs to increase knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal Cultural heritage and the needs of the Aboriginal communities
- Celebrate and support significant Aboriginal ceremonies and events, e.g. NAIDOC week, Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and Survival Day
- To continue to fly the Aboriginal flag in places such as City Administrative Centre, Council Chambers, Reception

room and in other prominent Council locations.

(Excerpt from the Shoalhaven City Council's Statement of Commitment)

smART spaces aims to connect the City's Arts & Cultural Heritage objectives with this Commitment. The City has actively been building relationships in the Arts, and the recent relocation of the NAIDOC Week Open Art Exhibition and newly developed Shoalhaven Black Cockatoo Award to the School of Arts in the central business district of Nowra are just the beginning. These successful activities have generated many new ideas for future activities in the City to further recognise, celebrate and showcase Aboriginal arts and culture.

Through smART spaces, the City aims to;

Recognise Aboriginal Culture - past, present and future – as fundamental to the fabric of the arts in the Shoalhaven (1.3)





smARTspaces

Develop, support and empower Shoalhaven's Arts & Cultural Heritage sector to stimulate sustainable business and inspire excellence.

'smART spaces' offers a clear set of directions for the Shoalhaven City Council to support and empower the residents of the City to develop and sustain relevant Arts & Cultural Heritage practice.

The strategy aims to strengthen the sector, by looking at both the physical spaces in which we conduct business as well as the platforms in which we choose to share, promote, learn and celebrate. 'spaces' ranging from;

a web-based portal as a space to communicate, a new partnership as a space for growth, a festival as a space for celebration and development of community pride, an itinerary as a space to progress or a conversation as a space for new ideas and collaboration.

The strategy focuses on four different, though related goals, each in support of the overarching Vision:

OpensmARTspace - The Shoalhaven is a region of diverse accessible spaces to express, explore and celebrate.

UniquesmARTspace - The Shoalhaven is recognised as an Arts & Cultural Heritage destination.

SharedsmARTspace - Shoalhaven's arts practitioners and organisations actively engage across the Arts & Cultural Heritage sector.

BusinesssmARTspace - The Shoalhaven is a leader in Arts Business partnerships.

opensmARTspace

Goal 1: The Shoalhaven is a region of diverse accessible spaces to express, explore and celebrate.

ACTIONS

APPROACHES

1.1 Provide the Shoalhaven community with information to expand knowledge and increase opportunities for arts activity in the Shoalhaven.

Produce and publish Dialogue, the Shoalhaven Arts Board's comprehensive arts directory.

Support Shoalhaven's Museum & Galleries Professional Breakfast Series held at various Cultural facilities.

Proposed future initiatives

- Develop Shoalhaven's Performing Arts Networking Group (SPRUNG) to be held at various venues.
- Review and develop an appropriate approach to progress the City's Public Art Collection.
- Support a collaborative web based portal on the City's diverse venues and facilities.

1.2 Empower and enable groups to initiate sustainable smart arts activities and learning opportunities.

Support Shoalhaven arts events and festivals through the Shoalhaven Arts Board's Arts Grants Program.

Provide accessible community facilities to the Arts & Cultural Heritage sector, including the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre and the Nowra School of Arts.

Continue to support the Arts & Cultural Heritage sector by availing Council properties in the form of tenancy agreements, lease agreements and properties governed by management committees – with community rates.

Improve and maintain Council owned cultural facilities.

1.3 Recognise Aboriginal culture —past, present and future — as fundamental to the fabric of the arts in the Shoalhaven.

Support Shoalhaven's NAIDOC Week Open Art Exhibition at the Nowra School of Arts.

Continue to work in collaboration with NAIDOC Week Art Committee in a professional development mentoring capacity.

Expand local Indigenous content in the City's Art Collections.

Proposed future initiatives

- Improve and expand local Aboriginal knowledge of opportunities available through the Council's Arts programs.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to identify culturally appropriate opportunities to increase the profile of local Aboriginal art and cultural heritage both locally and nationally.

1.4 Celebrate and respect the diversity of the Shoalhaven community through the Arts.

Engage local artists in the Shoalhaven Regional Gallery's exhibition and activity program.

Continue to encourage diversity through the Shoalhaven Arts Board Arts Grants Program.



arts centre

uniquesmARTspace

Goal 2: The Shoalhaven is recognised as an Arts & Cultural Heritage destination.

ACTIONS

APPROACHES

2.1 Acknowledge the value of current Arts & Cultural Heritage activity in the Shoalhaven.

Continue to develop the Shoalhaven Arts Board Arts Awards.
Distribute and promote Dialogue, the Shoalhaven Arts Board's comprehensive printed arts directory.
Further develop the Shoalhaven Arts Board's Arts Grants guidelines and selection criteria to recognise and encourage excellence in artistic endeavour.
Continue the Small Museum Grants Program.

2.2 Encourage the sector to integrate Arts & Cultural Heritage into the identity of Shoalhaven.

Support the local craft groups through the continued inclusion of the 'Creative Moments' exhibition in the Shoalhaven Regional Gallery annual program.
Proposed future initiatives

- Refine the City's Art Collections with well researched and articulated guidelines and a comprehensive policy for acquisition to emphasise works strongly connected to the Shoalhaven.
- Develop a professional seminar series to support individuals and organisations to develop their marketing and promotion practices.

2.3 Support Shoalhaven's significant Arts & Cultural Heritage facilities and activities as destinations for tourism, education and entertainment.

Continue to develop and promote Council owned Cultural Facilities, including the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre, the Nowra School of Arts and the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre.
Continue to work in partnership with Shoalhaven's significant cultural facilities in raising the profile of Shoalhaven.
Continue to support the Shoalhaven's Museum & Gallery Professional Breakfast Series.
Proposed future initiatives

- Develop and promote a comprehensive arts directory as a web based information portal.
- Foster industry standards in conservation management of the Shoalhaven's significant collections.

2.4 Engage with significant cultural agencies from outside the Shoalhaven region to foster professional development and cultural exchange to raise the profile of the Shoalhaven.

Actively seek nationally significant content for inclusion at the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre that offers the local community accessible exposure to top quality arts practice.
Using the Dialogue Magazine, advocate

- Shoalhaven's significant cultural assets to cultural institutions seeking loans.
- Shoalhaven's art collection and gallery spaces across the spectrum of arts and heritage agencies.

Liaise with state and national arts organisations to ensure the Shoalhaven is informed and included in future planning of arts events and activities.
Connect with arts and heritage organisations on a national basis through email newsletters and, where possible, meetings of key arts personnel.



sharedsmARTspace

Goal 3. Shoalhaven's arts practitioners and organisations actively engage across the Arts & Cultural Heritage sector.

ACTIONS

3.1 Encourage the sector to network and problem solve creatively.

3.2 Promote the benefits of collaboration and cooperation to strengthen Arts & Cultural Heritage in the Shoalhaven.

APPROACHES

Support the continuation of the Shoalhaven Performing Arts Networking Group (SPRUNG) and the Museum & Gallery Professional Breakfast Series.

Proposed future initiatives

- Develop a volunteer centralised database.
- Encourage new networking opportunities within the Shoalhaven.

Proposed future initiatives

- Further develop the Shoalhaven Arts Board's Arts Grants guidelines and selection criteria to encourage partnerships within the Arts & Cultural Heritage sectors.
- Research and develop a Shoalhaven Arts e-bulletin to increase distribution of information and cross promotion of activities.
- Contribute to an effective on-line calendar of events and activities across the Shoalhaven.



businesssmARTspace

Goal 4. The Shoalhaven is a leader in arts-business partnerships.

ACTIONS

4.1 Foster exchange between government, business, community and education sectors.

4.2 Promote Shoalhaven as an attractive destination for creative industries.

APPROACHES

Continue to work in partnership with training providers to link practitioners with professional development opportunities.

Review current activities and develop new value-adding programs for the Shoalhaven City Art Centre.

Proposed future initiatives

- Refer to Shoalhaven smART spaces, Shoalhaven City Council's Arts & Cultural Heritage Strategic Plan 2010 – 2014 to guide policy development and planning.
- Investigate the possibilities of student placements to facilitate arts research for the Shoalhaven City Art Centre.
- Promote the use of Arts & Cultural Heritage spaces for exchange between groups.

Continue to support Screen Shoalhaven's online directory.

Proposed future initiatives

- Targeted distribution and promotion of Council's Arts & Cultural Heritage publications.
- Contribute to a web based portal of information on Shoalhaven's venues and facilities.
- Online calendar of events – cross promotion of activities.
- Investigate feasibility of a web based portal that encompasses a range of Arts and Cultural Heritage agencies.



THE HISTORY

Over the past ten years, Shoalhaven City Council has worked with the community to build a strong foundation for Arts & Cultural Heritage activity within the region. This relationship, professionally managed by Council staff and guided by the expertise of the Arts Board, has enabled Council to actively respond to community needs and successfully develop a series of outstanding initiatives and facilities.

The Shoalhaven region now boasts one of the strongest folios of state-of-the-art Arts & Heritage facilities in New South Wales. Council directly facilitates arts activity through the management of the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre, Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, Shoalhaven City Arts Centre, Ulladulla Civic Centre and the Nowra School of Arts, and further supports the sector through the Lady Denman Heritage Complex and lease agreements with arts based groups within the community.

The existence of quality facilities, and continued growth in the arts, guarantees the Shoalhaven is well positioned to further develop its profile and to attract nationally significant arts product to the region – visiting artists, touring exhibitions, musical and theatrical productions, and cultural events. At the same time, the Shoalhaven provides an unsurpassed professional environment for local practitioners to develop and profile their work.

A series of consecutive three-year strategic arts plans has been developed and implemented in the past ten years which have contributed to formalising the way in which the city supports the Arts & Cultural Heritage sector toward its goals. It is now time to acknowledge the achievements of the past, review what has changed, and take a fresh approach to the structure of future endeavour for the Arts & Heritage of the Shoalhaven.





THE METHODOLOGY

In September 2009 legislation gazetted by the NSW Government required all councils across NSW under the Local Government Act to develop a Community Strategic Plan. This new planning phase coincided with ten years lapsing since the original Shoalhaven arts research was undertaken –fortunately availing Council’s Arts Unit to dove-tail with this larger consultation and planning process.

The integrated planning and reporting project incorporated a three-phase engagement strategy to guide the creation of the Community Strategic Plan. More than twelve hundred members of the community took part in the consultation through one of the following avenues; interactive website forum postage paid postcards, community workshops,

telephone and face-to-face surveys. The information gathered was then on public exhibition and a further call for comment asked from the community.

During the consultation, Council received comment from all areas of the community. These comments and areas for attention have been reflected back through the Community Strategic Plan under four key themes; Communities, Environments, Economy and Leadership. Areas of direct significance to smART spaces - which are addressed under ‘Shoalhaven Communities’ in the Community Strategic Plan are;

- Support and increase provision of events, festivals and celebrations which create community connectedness and harmony.
- Support an inclusive and engaged community.
- Encourage involvement in the arts and culture.
- Support increased work on reconciliation with the Shoalhaven Aboriginal community.

The Council’s smART spaces document aims to provide a detailed overview of how the Arts & Cultural Heritage area of Council will directly address these and provide a program which underpins the larger visioning document at objective 1.2 A creative, vibrant, generous, active

and learning community, and strategy, 1.2.3 Provide and manage spaces and programs that support the Shoalhaven Arts and Heritage sectors.

In addition to the Community Strategic Plan process, in late 2009, through a public expression of interest, the Shoalhaven Arts Board engaged a volunteer focus group to seek feedback from the Shoalhaven performing arts sector. The group met regularly over a four month period to discuss and articulate activities which they felt would be of greatest benefit to the arts sector. These include increased opportunities for the sector to;

- share information on volunteer opportunities and management.
- access mentoring opportunities to improve skills.
- share information on events, skill development and local venues through the web.
- develop an effective online calendar of arts based events.

The outcomes from this consultation were integrated with the earlier mentioned data and further information and comment gained from the Museum and Gallery sectors through the Professional Breakfast Series and the Shoalhaven Arts Board and have provided the foundation for smART spaces and the visioning for Arts & Cultural Heritage in the Shoalhaven in the coming years.

