

MEETING NOTES



Arts & Creative Industries Reference Group

Date	23 April 2024	Time	9:30am to 12:30pm
Venue	Chambers - Yalawanyi Ganya	Note-taker	Rachel Piercy
Present	Mayor Claire Pontin, Deputy Mayor Alan Tickle, Cr Jeremy Miller, Alex Mills, Rachel Piercy, Alana Parkins, Mark Sampson, Wendy Buswell, Grant Saunders, Kay Armstrong, Karen Kerkhoven.		
Guest	Chris Tippet, Janine Friedrich (Acting for Lisa Greenwood)		
Apologies	Paul de Szell, Leigh Vaughan, Jennifer Power		
Attached documents	Council Cultural Development & Institutions Briefing		

Meeting Items

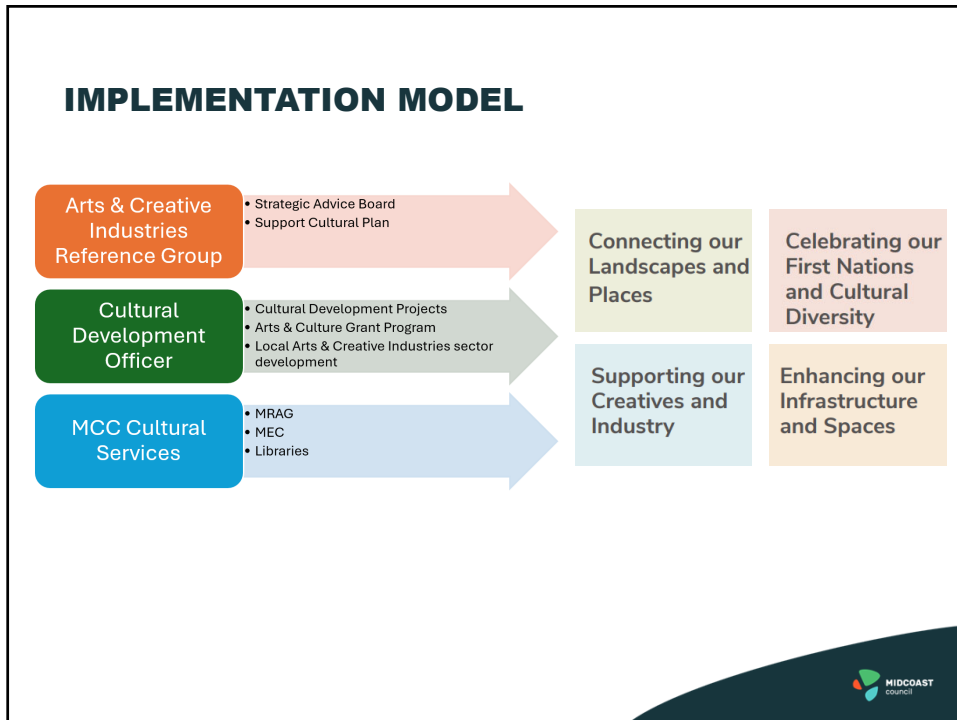
Item	Topic
1	Acknowledgement of Country Mayor Claire Pontin delivered Acknowledgement of Country.
2	Apologies Paul de Szell, Leigh Vaughan, Jennifer Power
3	Previous Meeting Business Arising No business arising
4	MidCoast Arts Support Program Application Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Reference Group noted Conflict of Interest disclosures declared by Cr. Claire Pontin, Rachel Piercy, Leigh Vaughan, and Kay Armstrong15 applications were considered for the inaugural MASP round seeking a total of \$65,584.86 in funding.As per the Terms of Reference a group consensus was used to assess the applications and make recommendations to Council.
5	Update about current community Cultural projects across the region deferred to next meeting.
6	Council Cultural Development & Institutions briefing – power point attached.

Next meeting

Date	4 June 2024	Time	10am to 12noon
Venue	Yalawanyi Ganya + ZOOM	Note-taker	Rachel Piercy




1



2

CULTURAL SERVICES SNAPSHOT

Libraries	Manning Entertainment Centre	Manning Regional Art Gallery	Cultural Development*
Category: Core	Category: Non Core	Category: Non Core	Category: Non Core
Legislation: Library Act	Legislation: Nil.	Legislation: Nil.	Legislation: Nil.
Staffing: 30FTE	Staffing: 4.69FTE	Staffing: 2.44FTE	Staffing: 1FTE
KPI's: On Track^	KPI's: On Track^	KPI's: On Track^	KPI's: Off Track
Net Cost: \$3.4M	Net Cost: \$843k	Net Cost: \$266k	Net Cost: \$
Funding Source: Council & NSWGovt.	Funding Source: Council & Revenue	Funding Source: Council, Revenue & NSWGovt.	Funding Source: Council
Capital Investment: \$540.5k	Capital Investment: \$79k TBC	Capital Investment: \$79k TBC	Capital Investment: Nil.



3



Manning Regional Art Gallery



4

MANNING REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Serving the MidCoast region and beyond, the Gallery is a vibrant cultural hub which nurtures innovative contemporary artistic practice and fosters community engagement with the arts.

The Gallery, based in Taree is a 1907 Heritage building, both retrofit and extended to provide 350m² of exhibition, workshop, collection space and outdoor spaces dedicated to the visual arts.

HOW WE WORK

- Cultivate strong and sustained relationships with regional, national and international artists
- We work collaboratively with artists and community to provide consistent quality product and services
- We take pride in our work and delivery a professional level of service to the region
- Create and develop partnerships with community groups and peak industry bodies
- Approach our work enthusiastically, sustainably and proactively



5



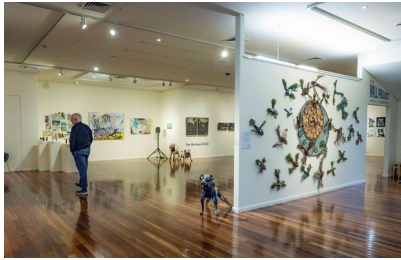
OUR TEAM

Our small team of three permanent, and three casual staff, work in partnership with the 'Friends of the Gallery' and the 47 active volunteers who contribute on average 98 hours per week, to manage the day-to-day operations of the Gallery.

- Post COVID-19 visitation 15,000 per year
- 20 exhibitions per year (average)
- 180 programs and events per year (average)
- MidCoast Council Art Collection 460 works



6



2021-2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 Touring exhibitions, including the Archibald Prize 2021, 2022 Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award (JADA), Saltwater Freshwater Arts 2021 & 2023 and Zoonoses.
- 22 solo shows, showcasing the work of artists such as Stephen Michael King, Laura Mathews, Michael Simms, Leonie Reisberg and Jessie Beard.
- 25 group shows
- 122 local artists shown in group, solo and touring exhibitions
- Naked & Nude Art Prize 2021 and 2023 with a total Prize pool of \$75,000



7



'The Art of Wool' New England Regional Art Museum touring exhibition



'Archibald Prize 2021' regional touring exhibition Art Gallery of New South Wales.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT WE DO

- Plan and deliver exhibitions, public programs, events and education programs
- Facilitate public access and education in the arts, through public programs such as floor talks, workshops, skill development and mentoring
- Provide mentoring support and opportunities for artists and arts workers
- Manage and maintain the Council art collection
- Facilitate income streams such as art sale commissions, retail sales, venue hire and donations
- As a New South Wales Regional Gallery, it is at our core to contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of the creative industries of NSW



8



Wingham Winter Solstice Lantern Walk



Wingham Akoostik – Circartus Fruit bat stilt walkers

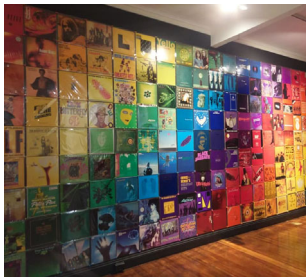
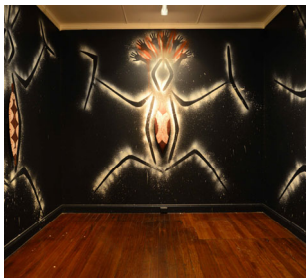
MIDCOAST CULTURAL PLAN 2036

Connecting our landscapes and places:

- Providing expert advice and support for new public art – the Gallery Director is a member of the MCC Public Art working group to access and facilitate new public art in the region
- Support the formation and promotion of the new MidCoast Arts Support Program – share and promote the program within our networks
- Support the development of new programming initiatives for active and vibrant town centres – staff work with community groups, MCC Economic development team and Event organisers to source external funding to create new programs



9



MIDCOAST CULTURAL PLAN 2036

Celebrating our First Peoples and cultural diversity:

- Continue to provide a program of workshops and events of Aboriginal arts and culture – allocate resources and funds for Aboriginal Cultural practitioners to deliver programs for NAIDOC week, Gallery curated exhibitions and touring shows. Continue to work with the Dept of Ed and AGNSW to provide the HOME: Aboriginal Art from New South Wales to stage 3 students in public primary schools.
- Support Aboriginal artists to tell their story and engage with community by engaging Aboriginal artists in key public art projects, exhibitions or programs – allocate resources and funds for loan of works for exhibition and programming.
- Support both the Aboriginal Community and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) community to share their stories and engage in cross cultural learning – partner with external organisations to provide cultural walks and activities



10



MIDCOAST CULTURAL PLAN 2036

Supporting our talented creatives and industry:

- Continue to provide skill development opportunities of our local creatives – to lift the professionalism of the region and foster home-grown talent.
- Continue to support new expressions of belonging, stories and connection to local places through the various exhibition spaces managed by council throughout the region – allocate resources and funds to deliver stories which are relevant and timely for creatives and the community.
- Continue to have a strong Educational connection (preschools, schools, TAFE, universities) – skills development, excursions, workshops, specialised programs.



11



MIDCOAST CULTURAL PLAN 2036

Enhancing our infrastructure and spaces:

- Continue to ensure the Manning Regional Art Gallery is well maintained, sustainable and meets industry standards – manage infrastructure projects such as Regional Cultural Fund (Access and inclusion program) and Creative Capital (restroom revamp) and source external funds to support the capital renewal program
- Investigate potential sites and funding sources to deliver innovative ways to access arts and culture across the region – partner with internal and external stakeholders and investigate external funding sources.
- Work with the new Cultural Development Officer to create a supportive network with industry leaders to mentor emerging creatives – provide a space for networking events, a conduit via social media channels for connection and find external sources of funding for new mentoring opportunities.
- Utilise the new public WIFI available at the Gallery to become a digital infrastructure hub and connect creatives in innovative ways.



12



MANNING ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

13

MANNING ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE



The MEC is the premiere entertainment venue on the MidCoast

The Main Auditorium

500 Seat Proscenium Arch Theatre

High quality facilities and dedicated staff/volunteers which gives us a solid and trusted reputation in regional entertainment.

The Flett Studio

159 Seat Multi-purpose Studio with features that make it unique to the region.

An affordable and entirely accessible space that is yet to reach its full potential



14



OUR TEAM

The team consists of a Full time Theatre Manager and Senior Technician and Part time time Sales and Marketing staff and Venue Maintenance Technician. Plus 10 Casual Theatre Technicians and 5 Casual Front of House Staff.

40 Volunteers assist in ushering and bartending duties up to 2500 hours per year.

STATISTICS

- 30,000 visitors each year
- 25,000 ticket sales
- 70 Events
- 120 performances
- 200 days utilized in 2023 (3.8 days out of 7)
- 4.69 Full time equivalent staff



15



SEASON 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

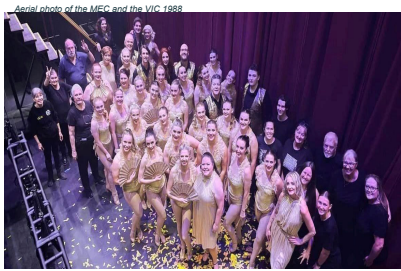
- The Opening of the Flett Studio on 24th January 2023
- 75 separate events
- 120 Performances
- 26,000 tickets valued at \$1,000,000 in Venue Hire Ticket Sales
- 4500 tickets valued at \$125,000 for Entrep Program
- Two Season Brochures – 7000 printed
- 8000 followers on social media
- 11000 Email Distribution List

Events and Performances Across Our Spaces

Space	1	2
Flett Studio Events and Performances	22	32
Main Auditorium Events and Performances	53	88



16



Aerial photo of the MEC and the VIC 1988

CONNECTING OUR LANDSCAPES AND PLACES

'A JEWEL IN THE MIDCOAST COUNCIL CROWN'

Opened in 1988 after 18 years of community fund raising

- Deep history and loyal following in the community as a cornerstone of the cultural identity of the MidCoast
- 120 events and 30,000 visitors per year contributes to activating our public spaces
- The MEC is an important economic driver for the MidCoast contributing to nighttime/weekend economy and providing opportunities for people to connect through the performing arts

'WE ARE NEW TO THE AREA AND THE MEC IS A BIG PART OF WHY WE MOVED HERE'

'WHO DOESN'T LOVE THE MEC'



The Old Bar Men's Shed Upgrading Flett Studio Dressing Rooms

ENHANCING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND SPACES

THE MEC HAS A CONSISTENT SCHEDULE OF UPGRADES MANAGED BY THE MEC TEAM

Capital Expenditure of \$70k each year

- Green Room, Foyer and Dressing Room Upgrades
- Sustainability Grant \$300k to upgrade Main Stage Lighting
- Main Stage Lighting Bar Upgrades \$50k
- Air Conditioner Upgrade \$85k
- House light Upgrade \$35k
- Auditorium Safety – Stair Nosing for auditorium and backstage \$70k
- Marketing Rebrand, signage and painting \$50k
- Flett Studio Design and Construct \$4.5M

IMPROVING ACCESS FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Grant funded project valued at \$200k

- Accessibility Audit Report
- Foot paths and handrails
- Wheelchair lift
- Crying Room
- Increasing Accessible car spaces





Circa Cairns – 'The Wet'



The Biripi Dancers at the Flett Studio Ministerial Opening 24th January 2024

CELEBRATING OUR FIRST NATIONS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

PROMOTING FIRST NATIONS THEATRE

- Investing in First Nations theatre and music through our entrepreneurial program
- Providing Workshops and other engagement opportunities for local arts practitioners
- Excursion and Incursions for local schools and providing positive role models for our indigenous youth.
- Offering a selection of tickets to elders when possible

LOCAL CELEBRATIONS

- Incorporating Welcome to Country in our programs
- Supporting NAIDOC celebrations through local schools

CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- Indian Cultural Festival
- Soweto Gospel Choir, Mother Africa, Irish Touring
- Taree Film Society Films



Taree Arts Councils – Mary Poppins on the Main Stage



SUPPORTING OUR CREATIVES AND INDUSTRY

THE HOME OF OUR PERFORMING ARTS GROUPS

Low cost fee structure designed to encourage community groups to participate and perform.

The MEC is a 'one stop shop' for producing events. We assist in event concept and creation, production management, sales and marketing.

- Sinfonia
- Taree Arts Council
- Taree and District Eisteddfod
- Stagmites
- Local Schools, Dance Schools, Drama Groups
 - Several new businesses have joined the MEC annual Season

THE FLETT STUDIOS POTENTIAL

Specifically designed and built to increase participation in the performing arts.

A low cost space that is completely accessible with high quality facilities unique to the area.

- Taree Film Society
- Circartus
- Starburst, Aspire, Int Day for People with Disability
- Tourism, Economic Development, Industry Groups





MIDCOAST COUNCIL LIBRARIES

21

Artwork in the making at the Buldahdelah NSW Senior's Week Festival

LIBRARY VISION AND MISSION

Our mission is to be a library service that:

- * Provides an excellent client experience
- * Has a high level of staff expertise
- * Is a welcoming and inclusive destination
- * Is innovative and flexible
- * Provides cultural enrichment
- * Partners with the community to nurture creativity and knowledge

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22



Baby Rhyme Time at Forster Library

11 LIBRARIES ARE DOING A LOT

- Libraries at Forster, Gloucester, Taree, Bulahdelah, Hallidays Point, Harrington, Nahiack, Old Bar, Stroud, Tea Gardens and Wingham

In 2023:

- Library staff delivered 600 programs to 7,100 participants
- We lent 680,770 items
- Were visited by 245,867 people
- We had 26,299 active members



23

LIBRARIES: CONNECTING OUR LANDSCAPES AND PLACES

Our 11 branches service all 10,000km of the MidCoast area

Each library branch is unique

Forster Civic Precinct developed as a community asset, public and community accessible spaces, but also adding a lot to MidCoast culture

Local studies and history collections at all 11 libraries

2337 local studies and history items

Local family and history societies in 3 libraries

Forster library showcases displays of local historical items



Forster Library Display of historical items



24



Story time at Taree Districts Preschools NAIDOC Day

LIBRARIES : CELEBRATING OUR FIRST NATIONS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

We support local events that celebrate our local cultural landscapes,

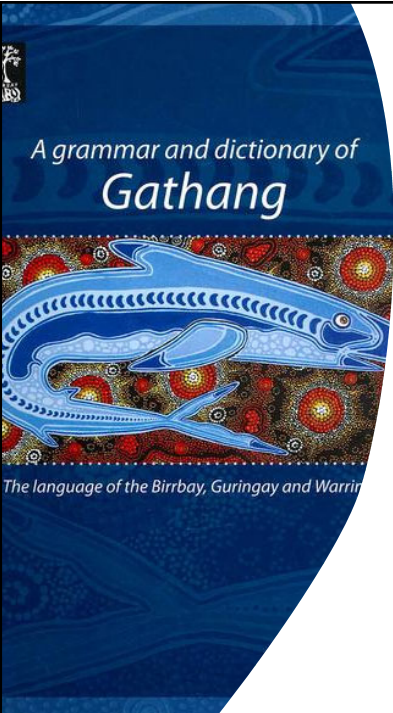
We attend and run programs such as pop up story time and craft activities at events outside the library:

- Saltwater Freshwater Arts
- NAIDOC events at Forster and Taree
- Girrawan Pre-school and First Steps Count

We also host an Elders family history group



25




A grammar and dictionary of
Gathang

The language of the Birripi, Guringay and Warrimi

LIBRARIES: CELEBRATING OUR FIRST NATIONS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

We showcase our connections to local Aboriginal culture and actively strive for all library branches to have copies of locally produced written materials that showcase

- the Gathang language,
- Local Aboriginal stories,
- Local Aboriginal culture,
- Local Aboriginal history and
- Knowledges of the Biripi, Guringay and Worimi
- Our Aboriginal Cultural collection includes 1876 items that are available for loan



26



Forster Upcycling textiles workshop

LIBRARIES: SUPPORTING OUR CREATIVES AND INDUSTRY

- We provide library spaces for creative groups to meet in and create
- Hallidays Point Library hosts rotating art exhibitions by local artists
- Workshops by the library for the community to participate in
- Library collections as inspiration and a resource
- Podcast room at Forster Library



LIBRARIES : ENHANCING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLACES

Our libraries are used as places to display art:

- Forster, Hallidays Point, Harrington, Taree, Wingham and Nabic
- We are reimagining our libraries as active sites of culture production and dissemination;
- Podcasting room to capture local stories
 - MidCoast Festival of Stories
 - Forster Civic Precinct as a multipurpose facility available for arts and culture, leisure and business





LIBRARIES: FUTURE PROJECTS TO SUPPORT THE CULTURAL PLAN

- Future iterations of the MidCoast Festival of Stories
- Aboriginal Outreach Officer position
- Continued collection development and a reviewed collection development policy
- Library outreach programs continue to evolve and align more closely
- Outreach program to feature local Aboriginal stories told by local elders

