



CELEBRATE - CONNECT - INSPIRE

Arts and Cultural Plan 2016-2020



Cover image: RADF funded community arts project On the Fringe Belonging, collaborative performance piece for Sarina Festival 2015. Projection by Donna Maree Robinson, performance by Creative Edge Dance Studio. Image credit: John Blessas.

Inside cover image: Paulo Almeida from Sol Nation entertains the crowd at Global Grooves Multicultural Festival in Queens Park 2015. Image credit: Priit Siimon Creative.





acknowledgement of country

Mackay Regional Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters that make up the Mackay region, on which we work and live. We acknowledge their elders past and present. We also acknowledge the important protocols of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander communities across the Mackay region.

mayor's message

This Plan articulates the vision for our region's artistic and cultural development over the next four years. It is a plan which outlines the collaborative support required for the Mackay region to develop as an artistic and culturally significant destination for arts and cultural tourism.

It is a plan that captures our pride and drive in this very important area of community life. We are Australia's 13th largest regional centre by population and we are very proud of what we offer culturally:

- › An award-winning art gallery;
- › A convention and entertainment precinct many other centres are envious of;
- › A network of regional museums; and
- › A diverse and vibrant arts and cultural community.

Our footprint stretches from thirty-one coastal beaches, through small valley townships to the mountain ranges, covering 7,500 square kilometres.

As well as an exciting story to tell about the cultural development over 155 years of European settlement in our valley, there is also the magnificent cultural history of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Add to that the story and culture of our Australian South Sea Islanders who have been part of this community for 150 years, and the people from over 70 nations who have become citizens in our Region over the last decade, and it is easy to see that we are a vibrant and diverse region.

That diversity is celebrated regularly with a number of annual festivals and events which are well supported by residents. The Mackay Regional Council Arts and Cultural Plan 2016-2020 presents our artistic and cultural credentials. As a Council we endorse the vision of a vibrant and culturally-rich region supporting each other to Celebrate, Connect and Inspire through arts, culture and creativity.

Mayor Greg Williamson
July, 2016

CELEBRATE - CONNECT - INSPIRE

INTRODUCTION

Mackay Regional Council has embarked on the development of a new Arts and Cultural Plan to articulate council's commitment to supporting a culturally vibrant region. The Arts and Cultural Plan provides a strategic framework to guide council in making timely decisions regarding financial and human resource investments for the development of all forms of arts, culture and heritage, as well as the broader cultural engagement and enrichment of community life.

The Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 – 2020 builds on council's Corporate Plan for 2015 – 2020. Council's support for arts, culture and heritage acknowledges the social, health and wellbeing and economic benefits of fostering a diverse, culturally-engaged and active community.

Image: The LTL Group perform at Chinese New Year Celebrations in the City Centre 2016.
Image credit: Ben Dolphin Photography.





what do we mean by **arts** and **culture**?

Art refers to essentially creative aspects of culture and includes activities such as live music, theatre, literature, visual art, craft, film-making, design, dance, new media, architecture and popular culture.

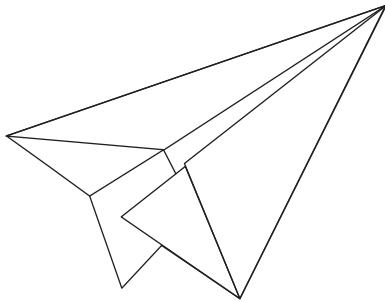
Culture refers to the ways members of the community interact; particularly those interactions which influence how people experience being part of their community. Culture is about identity, history and a sense of place; the things which society considers to connect the past, present and future.

“The arts are an essential public good that create a ripple effect of benefits felt throughout our community. They provide a unique expression of what it means to be human, that is fundamental to our nature and affects us all, through all the possibilities of participation in roles as artists, arts workers, practitioners, teachers, students, critics, supporters and consumers.”¹

¹ Jackson M, Kabwasa-Green F & Herranz J. (2006). Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators. USA: The Urban Institute.

VISION: our guiding **principles**

Mackay is a vibrant and culturally rich region that supports a diverse, robust and creative community and strives to make the arts collaborative, accessible and inclusive of all.



We believe that arts and cultural activity benefits the whole community. It contributes greatly to the social, economic and cultural vibrancy of place, and engenders a sense of identity and belonging. Our guiding principles for developing the Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 – 2020 are aligned with those principles outlined in the ‘Arts for all Queenslanders Strategy 2014- 2018’.²

Local is where culture counts

Local networks and connectors, local skills development, local opportunities and local products are key to placemaking, pride-building, local economy and cultural tourism engagement. Strengthening our local community means strengthening our region.

Participatory culture has landed

Like sport, art has the potential to enable many people to have a stake in the making, presenting, supporting and discussion of culture. People’s active participation in arts and culture and their own creative, artistic and cultural expression are central to a strong arts community.

Quality matters

Along with excellence, beauty and inspiration, people want relevance, value and authenticity. Quality arts and culture has a connection – a dialogue with its communities. Quality arts businesses and projects continuously learn and improve. Arts and culture that receives public investment must return public value (artistic, cultural, social or economic) to its communities of interest and practice.

Embracing diversity gives us an edge

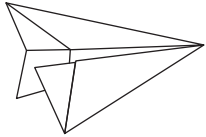
Diverse cultures, ethnicities, heritage, age groups, abilities, forms, locales and scales of arts practice give us a competitive edge culturally and economically. Connecting with and within this plurality will strengthen our cultural offers.

² Arts for all Queenslanders Strategy 2014 – 2018. Arts Queensland, Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, Queensland Government

Image: RADF funded collaborative community arts project Float my Boat, featured at Wintermoon Festival in Cameron's Pocket 2014.

goals and **strategies** for action





VIBRANT SPACES AND PLACES

Key Objectives

1. Open, inviting, engaging and vibrant cultural facilities
2. Raise the profile of council's unique art and heritage collections
3. Accessible community spaces for creating, rehearsing and showcasing
4. Vibrant festivals and events which support local, creative capacity-building
5. Engaging and surprising activation of public spaces

“Festivals are pivotal dates on the annual calendars of towns and villages: they bring together scattered farm folk, young and old and disparate subcultures: they blend attitudes, enlargen social networks and encourage improvements in social cohesion.”³

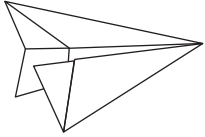
³McQueen-Thomson D, James P & Ziaguras C. (2004). Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing Through Community and Cultural Development: A Review of Literature Focusing on Community Festivals and Celebrations. Melbourne: VicHealth & RMIT University.

Image: Marissa Moore completes Orchid House, from the Hidden Beauties series of photographed bodypaintings where local people were blended into our local live environment. Image credit: Marissa Moore Photography and Bodypainting Mackay.



Image: Cultural group Didge Beats perform at Global Grooves Multicultural Festival in Queen's Park 2016.
Image credit: Ben Dolphin Photography.





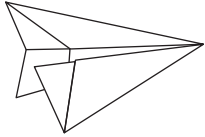
CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSITY AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY PRIDE

Key Objectives

1. Celebrate and recognise our diverse cultural community
2. Increase understanding and appreciation of Mackay's Indigenous culture and history
3. Build Mackay's reputation as a place of cultural and heritage significance and develop a confidently-expressed identity

**“[The arts] transcend barriers
of language, culture, ability, and
socio-economic status.” ⁴**

⁴ Jermyn H. (2001). Arts and Social Exclusion: a Review Prepared for the Arts Council of England. UK: Arts Council England.



ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Key Objectives

1. Increase communication and collaboration between internal cultural services
2. Develop relationships with neighbouring councils
3. Build and diversify the local economy by value-adding through arts and culture
4. Develop cultural tourism initiatives in partnership with Mackay Tourism
5. Investigate collaborative opportunities between the arts sector and local health service providers

“Partnering with the arts connects businesses with the community, increases marketing impact, employee morale and engagement, and encourages creativity among staff, providing new thinking and new ideas.” ⁵

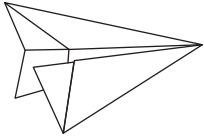
⁵ Creative Partnerships Australia. Benefits of Partnerships to Businesses. <https://www.creativepartnershipsaustralia.org.au>



Image: RADF funded community arts project facilitated by Wanda Bennett with Sarina High, Swayneville Primary and Carmilla Primary State Schools, featured at Sarina Festival 2015.
Image credit: John Blessas

Image: Glow in the dark room at the Arty Party 2013.
Image credit: Artspace Mackay.





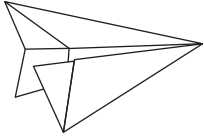
LIFELONG LEARNING

Key Objectives

1. Value, encourage and support council and community volunteers
2. Support the professional development of local creatives to increase employment opportunities
3. Continue to support professional development opportunities for internal cultural staff
4. Encourage young audiences to engage with museums and heritage facilities

**“The arts are not the flowers,
but the roots of education.”⁶**

⁶ Cited in Dance Education and Training in Britain, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1980, page 3.



ENHANCE ADVOCACY AND PROMOTION

Key Objectives

1. Evaluate and measure arts, culture and heritage activities
2. Promote the social, health and economic benefits of arts and culture
3. Embrace the use of technology to promote arts and cultural activities
4. Improve and provide adequate signage for cultural facilities

“Investment in cultural infrastructure and events contributes to local economies by providing a focal point to attract tourist dollars and help promote a city’s image as a cultural destination and by attracting highly skilled and educated workers to communities.”⁶

⁶ Jeannotte S. M. (2008). Shared spaces: social and economic returns on investment in cultural infrastructure. Canada: Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa.

Image: Wine & Food Day, Mackay Festival of Arts 2015.
Image credit: Just One Moment Photography.



DEFINITIONS

Within this plan, any reference to the ‘council’ means Mackay Regional Council. As a plan of council the words ‘we’, ‘our’ etc. also refer to Mackay Regional Council.

Advocacy is the act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person, place, or thing.

Art refers to essentially creative aspects of culture and includes activities such as live music, theatre, literature, visual art, craft, film-making, design, dance, new media, architecture and popular culture.

Capacity-building refers to the development of a skill or competence, or for general upgrading of performance ability and effectiveness.

Collection refers to the Mackay Regional Council Collection of items and images representing the heritage of the Mackay region and artworks within the Mackay Regional Council Art Collection, managed by Artspace Mackay.

Community art refers to artistic activity based in a community setting, characterised by interaction or dialogue with the community, and can be in any artistic form.

Cultural diversity refers to multiculturalism as an expression of our multi-faceted culture, which supports diverse cultural practice.

Cultural tourism refers to the experiences and products available to visitors about what makes a destination distinctive – its lifestyle, history, heritage, arts, and diverse cultures.

Culture refers to the ways members of the community interact; particularly those interactions which influence how people experience being part of their community. Culture is about identity, history and a sense of place; the things which society considers to connect the past, present and future.

Ephemeral refers to things that are short-lived, transitory or lasting a very short time.

Heritage refers to the people, experiences, objects and environment (built and natural) that have contributed collectively to the community’s understanding of the Mackay region.

Placemaking refers to a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalises on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and wellbeing.

Regional refers to provincial cities, rural and remote areas and isolated communities.

Site-specific refers to artwork created to exist in a certain place. Typically, the artist takes the location into account whilst planning and creating the artwork.

Social Media refers to online activity integrating technology, social interaction, and the sharing of text, images, audio and video.

Volunteering refers to time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

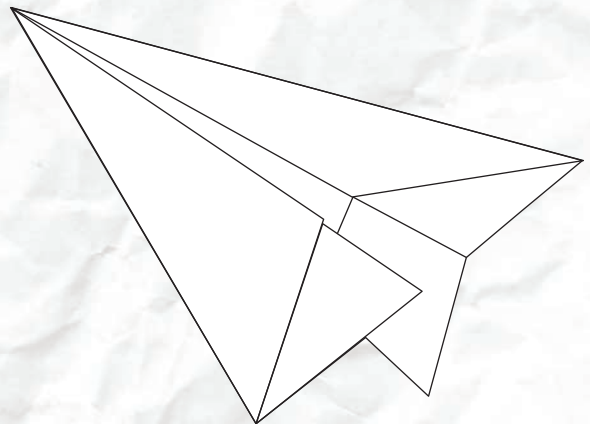
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Following a tender process, Mackay Regional Council engaged consultants Wanda Bennett and Tracey Heathwood to conduct a review of the Cultural Plan 2011 – 2015 and to develop a new Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 – 2020.

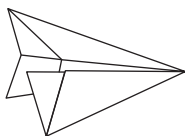
Consultants Wanda Bennett and Tracey Heathwood conducted planning over four distinct phases: scoping; auditing; consultation and; plan development.

Combining feedback from community brainstorming sessions, an online survey and stakeholder meetings, with information made available by council as well as other research; and taking account of available resources and anticipated external funding opportunities, consultants Wanda Bennett and Tracey Heathwood proceeded to develop the Arts and Cultural Plan 2016 – 2020 as a realistic and practical plan for the council and the community. Presentations and the opportunity for feedback were held with relevant council staff and Councillors before the plan was made available to the public for comment.

We thank consultants Wanda Bennett and Tracey Heathwood for facilitating such a comprehensive and inclusive process and delivering to our community a relevant and workable Arts & Cultural Plan.



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Australian Government

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