



Ballina Shire Cultural Plan

Issues Paper



Introduction

Whether we realise it or not, we all participate in cultural activity. It may be that we play sport, surf, pray, meditate, attend community events at our local hall, visit art galleries or museums, work as artists, designers, craftspeople or musicians; or we picnic or walk in public and natural places. Given the pleasure and benefit cultural activity brings to our lives, and community, Ballina Shire Council is preparing a Cultural Plan to assist in fostering future cultural activity for the whole community. Council, community groups and individuals can all work towards supporting cultural activity.

This *Issues Paper* aims to help you to participate in the Cultural Plan process by having your say about cultural activity. Council needs your assistance to understand the types of cultural activity the shire's residents participate in and value most.

About a Cultural Plan

What is a Cultural Plan?

A Cultural Plan is a forward thinking document that sets out what cultural activity a community values most, how this activity can be fostered through having cultural activity goals and how these will be achieved or prioritised. It is developed by understanding what cultural activity already takes place in a community, where and how; and whether the range or type of cultural activity that already takes place can meet future needs or expectations?

What does 'cultural activity' include?

Cultural activity is often understood as being activities associated with creativity or the arts. Cultural activity is, however, broader ranging and can also include sport, religion, conserving the character of a place or holding art exhibitions. The cultural activity valued by any community is shaped by its natural and built environment, as well as people – their age, gender and cultural and social background. Each of us values different cultural activity for different reasons. Similarly, different communities value different cultural activity, reflecting community character.



Why is a Cultural Plan important?

A Cultural Plan assists in matching the cultural needs and wishes of a community with its cultural asset or resources. Cultural assets embrace the places, features, buildings and people that support cultural activity taking place. For instance, for an art exhibition to occur it needs a space, artists and artworks, as well someone to interpret and install the art-works. So the building, the artist and the curator are all cultural assets. If a community doesn't have an art gallery, or art space, but desires to hold art exhibitions, ideally it must plan for the construction or renovation of a building or space to hold art exhibitions. Like any form of asset, the thoughtful management of cultural assets leads to better decision making concerning how to develop, improve or foster the benefits derived from this asset.

Why is Ballina Shire Council preparing a Cultural Plan?

All levels of government plan for cultural activity in recognition of the benefits fostering culture and cultural activity brings to a community. These can include:

- A strong sense of local identity and an awareness of our distinctiveness as a community of people and as a place;
- Better public spaces through including, or retaining, infrastructure that supports the promotion of local culture or cultural activity taking place;
- More vibrant community life and increased community pride;
- Improved community well-being through balancing key sustainability elements – natural, economic, social and cultural;
- Increase opportunities to express our creative needs;
- Increased opportunities and employment for community residents working in cultural and creative industries;
- Increased quality of life.

Council's overarching community plan – *Our Community: Our Future Community Strategic Plan 2013- 2023* identifies 'connected community' as one of its four key planning directions. Fostering cultural activity contributes to achieving this and other broader community planning goals. This may be done by improving the delivery of existing cultural activities or by



promoting new cultural activity. Cultural activity can be fostered through Council's own cultural activity program, promoting community partnerships or assisting community groups.

Also, Council has an interest in cultural planning as a key provider, or manager, of community spaces and facilities on, or in, which cultural activity takes place.

A Cultural Snapshot of Ballina Shire

The following pages include a snapshot of facts and figures about the Ballina Shire area. The facts and figures included below are considered some of the key matters at the heart of cultural planning, or thinking about current and future cultural activity needs and wishes for the shire. These facts and figures are presented here to help your thinking about preparing your response to the Cultural Plan process (the statistical information below is sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics).

For further information regarding the social and economic profile of the Ballina Shire area go to <http://profile.id.com.au/ballina/home>.

About the Ballina Shire area

Ballina Shire is predominantly rural in nature. It includes the townships, villages, hamlets and localities of Alstonvale, Alstonville, Bagotville, Ballina, Brooklet, Cabbage Tree Island, Coolgardie, Cumbalum, Dalwood, East Ballina, East Wardell, Empire Vale, Fernleigh, Goat Island, Keith Hall, Knockrow, Lennox Head, Lynwood, Marom Creek, McLeans Ridges, Meerschaum Vale, Newrybar, Patchs Beach, Pearces Creek, Pimlico, Pimlico Island, Rous, Rous Mill, Skennars Head, South Ballina, Teven, Tintenbar, Tuckombil, Uralba, Wardell, West Ballina and Wollongbar.

Ballina Shire's current total population is 40,993 people. 48% of the total population are male and 52% female.

The Bundjalung people are our shire's traditional custodians

The shire's Aboriginal community includes Bundjalung families who are the traditional custodians of the Ballina Shire area. Aboriginal families in the Ballina Shire live predominantly



in Ballina and at Cabbage Tree Island. Custodianship of the Ballina Shire area by Aboriginal people dates back thousands of years.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up 3.1% of the total shire population. This total represents both Bundjalung families and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples.

What other cultural backgrounds are represented in our shire community?

- Other Ballina Shire residents identify with the following ancestry (and in this order proportionately) – English, Irish, Scottish, German, Italian, Dutch, New Zealand and Welsh. Following identifying as being of an English cultural background, 42% of residents identified simply as being Australian;
- 3.3% of the shire's population speak a language other than English at home – these languages include Italian, German, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, Thai, Filipino, French, Cantonese and Mandarin;

Where and how do we live?

- By far, the majority of the population lives in the urban areas of Ballina Island, East Ballina and West Ballina (15,121). There are also some 7,301 people, living in the Lennox and Skennars Head areas.
- 68.5% of the shire population lives in a free standing dwelling and 25.7% live in medium-density housing;
- 29% of households in the Ballina Shire rent and the median weekly rent for the shire is \$290;
- The average household size in the Ballina Shire is 2.35 people; 24.2% of households are couples with children while 29.4% of households are couples without children; 26.1% are lone person households;
- The average weekly household income is \$930;
- 71.5% of households are connected to the internet;
- 49 % of households have access to two or more vehicles with 7.4 % of households having no car at all;



What do we do?

- Of the total population 16,594 people are employed, 51.2% work full-time and 43% part-time, with 6.3 % unemployed;
- 16% of the total population have a Bachelors or Higher Degree, 8.4% an Advanced Diploma or Diploma and 21.2% have a vocational qualification;
- Most of the population works in the following occupations – Professional, Clerical and Administration, Managers and Technicians and Trades, Sales and Community and Personal Service;
- 22.6% of the total shire population does volunteer work and 13.2% provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability or long-term illness;

What else about us?

- Concerning age, the greatest proportion of residents fall into the following age brackets – 50-54 (7.7%), 55-59 (7.6%), 60-64 (7.3 %), 40-44 (6.7%), 10-14 (6.1%) and 15-19 (6.1%); with the median age of the entire shire population being 45 years;
- 68.1% percent of the shire population identify as being Christian; 2.2% are of non-Christian faiths; and 21.4 % identify as being of no-religion;

What are the stand out natural and made features contributing to our character of place?

- We experience a sub-tropical climate and lifestyle;
- The shire has a total land area of over 480 square kilometres, including significant areas of scenic coastline;
- The Richmond River is a central feature of Ballina's 'setting' and it bisects the floodplain to the south of the shire, while the volcanic red soil hills are a feature of much of the shire's hinterland area;
- The whole Ballina Shire area contains important Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and other cultural heritage features that contribute to the area's unique history and are important to the identity and culture of the shire's Bundjalung community;
- Approximately one third of the land in the shire is zoned for environmental protection inclusive of several Nature Reserve areas;



- 100 items and places are listed on Council's local environmental plan as items of environmental heritage – contributing to the historic built character of our towns and villages;
- Rural land is predominantly used for cropping, grazing, and fruit and macadamia nut growing, as well as strong scenic qualities;
- Ballina Shire is within a region of towns, villages and hamlets which also enjoy a rural setting;

What are our key cultural activity strengths?

- The shire has a community art gallery which runs cultural programs, it is well-patronised by some segments of the shire community and has a growing interest across other segments;
- We have proportionately high population of artists and craftspeople within the shire (and regionally), including Aboriginal artist and craftspeople;
- Both Council and community groups celebrate our cultural heritage, young people and older people through government initiated NAIDOC, Heritage, Youth and Seniors Festival/Week events;
- The shire has an annual calendar of community events and a strong volunteering community – contributing to our sense of place;
- The shire has several community based historical societies and volunteer run museums holding important historical document and object collections relating to the shire;
- A number of community based arts organisations, as well as a regional arts body – Arts Northern Rivers - service the shire (and region) promoting local and regional arts based cultural activities;
- A number of hotels and other venues regularly host live music featuring both local and other musicians across the shire;
- Ballina has a community theatre and mainstream cinema;
- The shire has a growing café and restaurant culture, as well regional cuisine culture;
- Alstonville, Lennox Head and Ballina hold regular community markets and Ballina has a weekly farmer's market;



- A number of our villages boast a historic public hall which is the focal point for locality based cultural activities;
- Ballina and Lennox Head are serviced by community centres which run cultural activity programs;
- Alstonville, Lennox Head and Ballina are serviced by public library facilities;
- The shire has a growing network of recreational walkways and cycleways;
- The shire is well serviced by public parks and sporting fields;
- Sporting groups in the shire provide for both children and adult sports;
- Both public school and denominational schools service the shire's child education needs; while adult education services include TAFE, community college and U3A programs;
- Most communities throughout the shire are serviced by the dominant Christian churches – Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Uniting;
- Significant numbers of people in the shire work across the cultural activity and creative industries sector – including in film and television, architecture and design, music and performing arts, and writing and publishing.

How can you participate in Council's cultural plan process?

Ballina Shire Council is preparing a Cultural Plan and wants to know about the cultural activities you value and participate in.

Let us know what you think

To complete Council's **Does Culture Matter?** online survey or read the Cultural Plan Issues Paper, go to Council's home page at www.ballina.nsw.gov.au and click the **Does Culture Matter?** link.

To complete a hard copy of the survey or read a copy of the Cultural Plan Issues Paper visit the Alstonville, Ballina or Lennox Head libraries, Ballina Shire Council's Customer Service Centre or the Kentwell Community Centre.

By completing the **Does Culture Matter?** survey you could win a \$50 ABC bookshop voucher.

Want to know more?.....

Contact Ballina Shire Council's Strategic and Community Facilities Group on telephone 6686 1284.