

Towards a new Culture Strategy 2017/2022

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION
AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2016**

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Focused discussions towards a new Culture Strategy for Cairns began in August this year. Since then we have spoken to 47 groups comprising 141 people.

It's been an extremely productive process and we are inspired by the spirit of goodwill and expertise that has been shared in these sessions. The knowledge, and more specifically, the capacity and willingness of participants to share their knowledge and vision for the arts and culture, is gratefully valued.

In spite of ongoing funding and resource challenges, there's been a groundswell of positive anticipation and a smorgasbord of ideas resonating across the conversations. Council teams have also been enthusiastically involved in the process, along with Arts Queensland, which is encouraging Cairns to think big, define our point of difference and emphasize our connectivity to the Asia Pacific.

The response that we have had throughout this consultation is more than matched by the overwhelming outcome of the Our Cairns community engagement project, where 6,400 people contributed to a vision for Cairns, thereby highlighting their desire to contribute to shaping the future of their city. Arts and Culture have been unequivocally recognised as an important part of the city's liveability. We also encourage you to read the [Our Cairns outcome reports](#), which illustrate the integral position of arts and culture within the fabric of our community.

From Council's point of view, the consultation directed towards a new culture strategy for Cairns, along with the confluence of events and activities that are on the horizon over the next few years, presents enormous opportunities. Some of these include: the development of a new Corporate Plan facilitating new operational synergies and opportunities; Cairns as an Event City for the 2018 Commonwealth Games; the opening of CPAC in 2018; and the new Court House cultural precinct.

These opportunities could be a springboard towards a new collaborative and co-operative approach to addressing challenges and realising some of our aspirations.

We look forward to continuing the dialogue early next year, when we will integrate the groups and individuals within each sector to take the findings of this report to the next level –consolidation, consensus and acceptance of priorities.



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

METHODOLOGY & PROCESS

Since 2015 Council has undertaken a staged and progressive process towards the development of a new Culture Strategy for Cairns. This has so far included the completion of the Strategic Review in Stage 1 and transition to our Strategy Setting phase through community engagement.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Consultation and community engagement around the development of a new culture strategy aims to:

- develop a people-centered and participatory approach to planning
- gain a better understanding of the strengths, issues and scope of the arts and cultural environment in Cairns
- build consensus and acceptance of priorities
- improve and develop programs and services that respond to identified needs, and
- foster community involvement and ownership of local community initiatives.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Between August and December this year consultation has taken place across a diverse range of organisations, community groups and individuals.



47 DISCUSSIONS



141 VOICES



**8 WRITTEN
SUBMISSIONS**

ABOUT THE REPORT

Discussions were framed around a basic agenda – challenges; opportunities; and expectations. This report provides a summary and snapshot of the key themes that have emerged across eight diverse sectors that make up the arts and cultural community of Cairns.

The report sets out findings under two categories.



Despite such a varied array of practitioners, producers, presenters and organisations, it seems we all share common challenges and aspirations.

KEY FINDINGS – ACROSS THE 8 COMBINED SECTORS

The biggest obstacle for around 44 percent of groups and individuals is lack of affordable and accessible production, storage and operations spaces. The challenge of short-term funding cycles and its impact on forward planning also rates high on the list, as does retaining our young and emerging creative talent.

In terms of opportunities for the future, over a third of those we spoke to see the need for a shared narrative to promote our artistic talent and cultural offerings to the world. Unifying the arts and culture networks is also considered to be a catalyst for future development.

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACE NEEDED

production and administrative

21 GROUPS



RECOGNISING AND GETTING BUY-IN AND CONSENSUS ON OUR UNIQUENESS

a shared narrative

15 GROUPS



MARKETING AND PROMOTION ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Opportunities there for more efficiency and effectiveness to promote our collective appeal

15 GROUPS



YOUTH FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS

Need to be engaged with and motivated

13 GROUPS



FUNDING SECURITY RESTRICTS PLANNING AND ACTIVITY

(Minimal) automatic funding for worthy events or organisations would be welcome

9 GROUPS



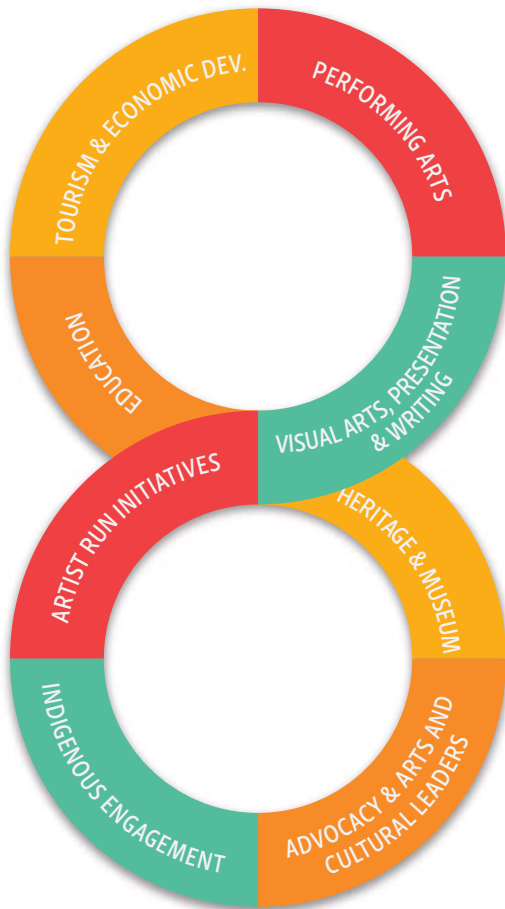
A general theme in regard to Council's responsibility in developing arts and culture is seen as providing a platform for cultural expression as well as entry points and access to the arts. A constant thread that runs through the conversations is that Council should be playing a supporting rather than direction role.

KEY FINDINGS - ACROSS THE 8 INDIVIDUAL SECTORS

Other common themes emanating from the discussions are outlined in the following section of the report, which provides findings from the eight distinct arts and cultural sectors. These sectors have been defined simply as a method to categorize and compile qualitative data, and by no means reflect the full spectrum and diversity of the arts and cultural framework here in Cairns.

The following findings respond to conversations around priorities and challenges, opportunities for the future and what they see as Council's role and how it could be improved.

The findings have been summarized and illustrated with verbatim quotes from consultation participants.



1. TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2. EDUCATION

3. PERFORMING ARTS

4. VISUAL ARTS, PRESENTATION AND WRITING

5. ARTIST-RUN INITIATIVES

6. INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

7. HERITAGE AND MUSEUM

8. ADVOCACY & ARTS AND CULTURAL LEADERS



**WHAT THE
TOURISM AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Economic Realities

› EXTERNAL FACTOR.

“We rely on tourism over 23% our economy - everyone else has to make up the rest. Health and government, and construction are main factors in this. If we continue to have under employment we continue to have a lagging construction industry. If we don't provide a climate where there are business and economic opportunities, we won't get government investment as it all comes down to votes.”

Uniting cultural activities - Package under one umbrella

› PACKAGING THE COLLECTIVE APPEAL.

“In a cultural sense we need a brand, something to unify the networks.”

› TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

“We need to internationalise Cairns, give it a cultural heart that beats - Council needs to provide the space for that to occur.”

› STRATEGY FOR IMPACT.

“Is the arts and culture marketable? Yes, but all disparate, not making a loud voice.”

Playing to our Strengths - Celebrating and promoting our uniqueness

› MAXIMISING ASSETS.

“Where are our unique strengths? Leverage our strengths, our unique regional competitive advantages - if we do it well, we do it right, and promote it.”

› SPLASH OUT WITH COLOUR.

“We need more festive and uplifting platforms - umbrellas or something that splashes out colour - we have lots of public art but we need more colour.”

› INCLUDE INDUSTRY.

“Another audience not being considered at the moment - Industry relocation - companies moving their head offices to Cairns and employing people here. We are not promoting Cairns well enough. There are complaints that there is no culture in Cairns.”



OPPORTUNITIES

Local unique to Cairns experience

› PLATFORMS FOR CULTURAL EXPRESSION.

“Cairns is a Commonwealth Games Event City in 2018, Cairns is a host City for NAIDOC week in 2017.”

› CULTURAL INDUSTRIES CONSORTIUM.

“Cairns Chamber of Commerce Regional Industry Leaders Program - putting one together for Creative Industries”.

› CULTURAL TOURISM AND LIVEABILITY.

“Bring people to our region specifically for arts and culture, which will help drive visitation and expenditure. Encourage people to stay here longer.” “Local events add flavour - they make Cairns a vibrant, happening, connected place”.

› CATALYST FOR GREATER OPPORTUNITIES.

“The ‘Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef’ campaign is about creating a feeling of connection and ownership of the reef locally and globally, a social movement. The concept is branded through art - the concept is coming together and it creates other leveraging opportunities.”

Strategic Alignment

› ECONOMIC SPRINGBOARDS.

“Opportunity to feed into Advance Cairns - new Regional Economic Plan”. . . “TTNQ and TEQ are currently developing the Destination Tourism Strategic Plan”. . . “There are changes imminent on how the State is marketed - tourists want a local experience. New campaign will be based on 5 experiential offers.”

› INDIGENOUS TOURISM.

“CIAF has become a tourism driver - Tourists want a local’s experience.”

› EVENTS TOURISM.

“Chinese New Year events in Cairns - who is the target market - could it be a driver for cultural tourism?”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Revitalise and Invigorate

› PRESENT OURSELVES WELL.

"Clean up the City. Get everyone involved in the vision of a smart, proud, clean city - we need an action plan around that."

› REGIONAL COLLABORATION.

"Maximise across region collaboration. Biggest push is multiculturalism - Mareeba, Ingham, Innisfail. They don't have the same resources as CRC, but they have vibrant communities."

› KEEPING THE TALENT HERE.

"Council's responsibility is to encourage our young people to stay here. As a council you are administering the City but you also need to facilitate a vibrant community. Cultural tourism is part of that".

Facilitation

› PROGRESSIVE PARTNERSHIPS.

"Council provides places of expression, Council's role is also to have an attentive ear when leaders and facilitators come to us - be leaders to begin with and then keep a strong hand at their back."

› PROVIDING THE MEANS.

"Communities want to make decisions about arts and culture, everyone has a view - Council provides the glue to bring them together. Council provides the means to articulate the views".

› LESS BRANDING.

"Doesn't help to have Council's logo on everything - try and take Council out of it sometimes."

Advocacy

› MAKING A CASE FOR INVESTMENT.

"We need to have conversations with Government, recognise the importance of an ongoing amount of money for Cairns - we need consistency in funding."



**WHAT THE
EDUCATION SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Youth - pathways into Creative Industries, real jobs & more arts education.

› OCCUPATIONAL RELEVANCE.

“How do we bring people into the creative industries - what are the pathways, where is the employment within the arts and culture? . . . “Need to have tangible pathways - for a parent to feel confident to encourage students to go into arts - also important for students to have that confidence.”

› KEEPING THEM IN CAIRNS.

“Retention of young people is critical - Young people and artists staying in Cairns - we need pathways.”

› CURRICULA EXPANSION.

“Curriculum demand in Schools leaves little for the Arts and it is an area requiring more focus and development in this area. We are a tourist destination that requires its own unique arts and cultural face.”

Celebrating our Uniqueness - Tourist destinations require unique local art

› POINT OF DIFFERENCE.

“MONA is a great example - finding that point of difference, what is different and special and leverage off that.”

› EXPLORING OUR UNIQUENESS.

“If we are being unique, we shouldn't copy - do something spectacularly different. As a community let's explore uniqueness - if we are talking about being different, we mustn't be.”

› AN EMBLEM.

“Greater Townsville Council has more support for arts organisations - Dance North are a highly successful touring company. Dance North become the ambassadors of that place. Something that Council might think about in terms of contemporary culture.”

Sustainability and Funding

› CITY/REGIONAL DICHOTOMY.

“When funding shrinks, funding opportunities appear to shrink towards the areas of highest demographics i.e. capital cities”

› QUEST FOR LIMITED FUNDING.

“At the moment it seems to be quite a fractured community - everyone is fighting for the same funding.”



OPPORTUNITIES

Investing in innovation – partnerships for research, mentoring & innovation hub

› HAVING OUR OWN HUB.

“If there was an innovation hub specifically for the arts, some of the bigger players, mature and established players - then something like that could work - Bigger than just a uni working in isolation.”

› THINK TANK.

“If we had an international think tank - what could we do to set up our city?”

› UNIVERSAL CO-OPERATION.

“Research expertise across JCU and CQU and willingness to partner”.

› BROADER INPUT AND COLLABORATION.

“U3A has a good solid brand and open to broader collaboration with Council. Very small but extremely dedicated committee”.

Maximising our collective resources

› MENTORSHIP.

“Young creatives working with mentors - going to be a huge opportunity as the new tertiary courses come to life”.

› TEACHERS CRITICAL.

“Teachers are a huge cultural resource, they’re the motivators.”

› CREATIVE RESIDENCIES.

“Part of the strength of what TAFE has to offer is the size of the community - being a regional centre provides fabulous opportunities - Visiting artists and creatives, opportunities to have access to them.”

› CROSS-POLLINATION.

“Stronger partnerships with galleries and extended to music, they value add.”

Celebrating our Uniqueness

› CULTURAL MAGNETS.

“Open us up to the world. Build on what we have and get people to stay and others to come - get internationally recognised creative expertise here. We could hold an international competition for a building in Cairns. Not just architecture, it could be film or printmaking.”

› CREATIVE WAYS TO TELL STORIES.

“Phone App recognising landmarks and gives you the Indigenous story about it. Our students could work on that - could be broader than Indigenous stories.”

› CONNECTION TO THE LAND.

“Stories that connect us to the land - somehow if we could weave that into the fabric of what we do here.”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Lead by example. Create the environment and facilitate - not lead. Support long-term plans.

› ENABLING.

"I see Council as enablers of the arts. Councils need to be actively creating opportunities."

› FACILITATING OPPORTUNITIES.

"Setting the tone and leadership. Not direction, but leading by example, this is where we want to be, this is the importance that we place on arts and culture. Risky, contemporary, celebrating the old masters - whatever it is, Council can help set the tone."

› POSITIVE SUPPORT.

"Be agile and responsive. Respond and support when people develop something interesting. Council need to take a lead role, plant a seed and get something going."

Identity and Placemaking

› PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART.

"Placemaking is not about parks or architectural buildings, it's about meaning & people. First people, then places, then buildings, the other way does not work."

› CULTURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS.

"Be careful not to homogenise a cultural brand - no one wants to be forced into a cultural tourism product - tricky but somehow attainable."

› HARVESTING COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS.

"If we are going to be unique, what makes us unique? Council needs to harvest that community aspiration - there are few people that live here that don't want it to be better."

Consultation

› MORE DISCUSSION ABOUT BIG-PICTURE ITEMS.

"General feelings that Council is doing less consultation around big projects - Reports from honours students saying that that's what the community is saying."

› PROCESS OF EVOLUTION.

"If Council want to facilitate, you have to create the environment, it will happen organically."



**WHAT THE
PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Building and Sustaining Capacity

› STRATEGIES TO SUSTAIN THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY OF THE SECTOR.

“The challenge is the same for all NFP’s - people have less time, volunteers are fewer. Need a full-time manager as a paid job - someone to handle all the grant applications - if able to get some kind of grant for operations would make it a lot easier.”

› NEW AND INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT ARE REQUIRED.

“Creating a connected community through the arts and culture relies very heavily on maintaining an attraction that spans the entire demographic. NFP Community orgs require a continual turnover of ‘new blood’. Instilling that pride and belonging to community is vital.”

Collaboration, Cooperation and Alliance

› PARTNERSHIPS WITH STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING BODIES.

“The Arts sector came together really well around the Senate Enquiry (nationally) - everyone fighting for themselves, but also for something bigger. All States now have Advocacy Groups - Advocacy is being done and we see the value of working together to make change.”

› ONGOING AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DIVERSE AND EXCITING EXPERIENCES.

“It is important to promote ourselves to audience members but also within the industry.”

› ONGOING COLLABORATION ACROSS THE NETWORK.

“It’s important that Council doesn’t colonise the work that’s already being done, and the only way we can do that is to constantly have conversation.”

Youth Community Engagement

› IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT.

“Grafton Arts was such an important part of the development of the arts here. Its beauty was that it was driven by an open slather approach - come on in, kids off the street. It wasn’t those people who could afford to take part in the arts. Diverse, multicultural - an open program.”

› DELIVERY OF DIVERSE ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING AND INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS.

“We are not just building new arts practitioners, we are building audiences, the students are going to be the theatre lovers of tomorrow.”

Celebrating our Uniqueness

› CULTURAL AND CREATIVE DIVERSITY.

“Diversity issue is broader than doing an Indigenous project here or there or having a CIAF - it’s about thinking about diversity in all the arts practice that we do. We want our arts to reflect what we see out there in the community. The great thing about where we live - we are a diverse one.”

› TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES.

“Guggenheim in Bilbao - has transformed the whole landscape, transformed an industrial place into an international destination.”



OPPORTUNITIES

Professional Development & Capacity Building

› INDICATORS AND STRATEGIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING.

“Bringing in big artists - like the Melbourne Ska Orchestra: great experience to have - But how can an organisation link in with a visiting company? It’s happening in an informal way - but we need lead in time to be able to organise. Would it be possible to say that for all of the product that Council import - a percentage of it has a professional development opportunity included in bringing them here?”

› EVIDENCED-BASED RESEARCH TO BUILD A CASE FOR INVESTMENT.

“There is currently limited critical research being undertaken about the scope and impact of arts activity generated and exported from the regions. There is an opportunity to collaborate with universities to lead the way in this critical research.”

Collaboration, Cooperation and Alliance

› CREATIVE INNOVATION HUBS.

“Big opportunity with CQU - because they are big advocates for the arts and starting a creative arts degree. Also an opportunity for CoCA to be a creative hub, an innovation hub. Getting other entrepreneurial businesses coming into the centre, architecture, designers, arts organisations.”

› CONNECTING OUR CULTURAL ANCHORS.

“There is a real opportunity for Munro Martin Parklands, CPAC, CoCA, Aquarium and Esplanade Walk that connects us all...”

“Throwing people together in a space - that’s how work is created. Whose responsibility is it? I don’t know, but a REAL hub is how things work.”

› CULTURAL EXCHANGE.

“Build relationships that enable Cairns to be present in other environments. They (Sister Cities) have stories that they would like to present. Local and global - it goes in and it goes out.”

Diversification from Reef and Rainforest - Celebrating our uniqueness

› EXPORTING OUR CREATIVE PRODUCT.

“Why not export our work? Cairns is old enough now to start thinking about exporting its art.”

› CULTURAL DESTINATIONS.

“To be a city that has facilities that are able to attract the best in the world - this is what I’d like to see, and I think we’re going to get there.”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Advocacy and Leadership

› INVESTMENT IN OUR CREATIVE TALENT AND CULTURAL PRODUCT.

"Advocacy is a huge part of what we would like to see from CRC. Once you have advocacy out there - you're building a culture of philanthropy in the arts. It's a great way of investing and giving back to the community for people who are generating profits from the community."

› SUPPORTING CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION.

"Leadership is a really strong need - in collaboration with artists and arts providers". . . "Council is in a great position to guide, but worry about Council being too dominating."

Accessibility and Inclusivity

› PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COUNCIL FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

"It's important to keep the costs for CPAC down for the NFP's as well as dance schools. Need to be able to access and afford the new theatre so that it is just not for the groups down south."

› ACKNOWLEDGING THE RICH CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE REGION.

"We've got such a multicultural city - there is a lot going on out there in different community groups, people for Laos and Samoa, and part of Council's role is to be aware of that."

Infrastructure and Space to produce

› PROVIDING VENUES AND SPACES FOR ENTERPRISE.

"Rehearsal and production space is very important. 10am - 5pm in the day is difficult to work around, or very expensive. Whose responsibility? It would be great it could be Councils."

› INVESTING IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE ARTS AND CULTURE TO THRIVE.

"Council's role is to support financially through the creation of infrastructure, grants for projects, and maintaining a cohesive big picture for the arts, culture and creativity in our community."



**WHAT THE
VISUAL ARTS, PRESENTATION
AND WRITING SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Space for presentation, production & storage

› ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE PRESENTATION SPACE.

“Seem to be a number of exhibition spaces around, but since Circa 1907 gallery closed - that’s a gap. It was inexpensive. Is there anywhere else in Cairns that Council could run in a similar way?”

› ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND PERMANENT PRODUCTION SPACE.

“Cairns has great presentation spaces which we are all proud of. It is important for artists to have these to be identified in the arts. What we don’t have is planned, community production spaces for emerging and incoming artists.”

› ACCESS TO OPERATIONAL AND STORAGE SPACE.

“We have 350 financial members. If we were a sports organisation we would have access to assistance to develop infrastructure. We currently have plant and equipment assets which we are forced to store at the private residences of committee members.”

Income/Funding/Insurance

› NFP AND INDIVIDUALS CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE WITH OPERATIONAL COSTS.

“Public liability is a universal problem [expensive]” . . . “Biggest challenges are space and insurance.”

› FUNDING CUTS, BELT TIGHTENING AND SHORT-TERM FUNDING.

“Three-year funding cycles – difficult to plan. State and Commonwealth Government funding has been difficult and will continue to be difficult to access.”

› LESS MONEY – MORE COMPETITION.

“Private sector funding is becoming competitive and national trends toward private sector investment aren’t reflected in Cairns.”

Publicity and Promotion – letting people know we exist

› GETTING OUR ART OUT THERE.

“One of our problems has been publicity. Otherwise, we’re very self-sufficient. People who just want to come for a casual visit - we’re very open. Range of what we do is broad. Letting anyone know we’re here, getting it out there is very difficult.”

› BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH CRITICAL MASS AND PLAYING TO OUR STRENGTHS.

“We need to pull together and create a synergy, gain national and international respect. We could put something together that nobody else has got.”

› EXPORTING OUR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE.

“We have a really unique culture - lucky we have it, we can export it and build on it”. “We promote ourselves as best we can, but agencies like TTNQ are not really taking a good look around at the Culture of Art and giving that a clear voice in their material.”

Encouraging and inspiring emerging and local artists (uniqueness of place)

› MENTORING AND COLLABORATION.

“Grass roots stuff works. If emerging artists work hard at developing skills, networks with other like-minded artists and persevere - they’ll get noticed and get to the next stage of their career.”

› OPPORTUNITIES AND PATHWAYS.

“At the moment we’re only working with good artists who just like living here, but we’re not being a drawcard for others. We want artists originally from this region to come back... prepare the ground work for them to have something to come back to; residency opportunities, good studios, opportunities.”



OPPORTUNITIES

A dedicated arts festival – International – Inclusive of Tropical Writers/Vis Arts/Performing Arts

› INDUSTRY/MASTERCLASSES/COLLABORATION/IDEA AND SKILLS EXCHANGE.

“An arts festival of Cairns would be a great thing. All the big events seem to happen within six weeks [around Cairns Festival time]...It would make sense for local government to sponsor an arts festival earlier in the year, so that we can dedicate time to the Cairns Festival later . . . We could have a month- long festival of arts to kick off the tourist season.”

Cultural Trail/Loop Bus/Cultural Map

› CONNECTING THE CITY'S ARTS AND CULTURAL DESTINATIONS.

“We need a loop bus around town - drop off at cultural destinations would be a great idea.”

› PROMOTING THE COLLECTIVE APPEAL.

“Lots of conversations about a cultural trail. People come in and say ‘where else can I go?’ All we need is a simple document, a brochure. Draw out a little map of other Galleries and places to go. That’s where that level of support is really lacking in Council.”

Placing visual arts; performing arts/music in the mix

› NEW MODELS OF COLLABORATION.

“Collaborating with sports venues is something new we haven’t tapped into.”

› SCREEN INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE.

“We would dream of a screen arts space that is wet and dry.”

› STRATEGIC COLLABORATION.

“TAFE could work with Tanks and CoCA so that students have real exhibition outcomes and sales.”

› SELF-INITIATED ENTERPRISE.

“Could be events down at the Esplanade every night – artists should take the initiative to do this themselves, pay the price and get something happening.”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Ongoing space for production

› SPACE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION.

"If there is demonstrated need then that could be Council's role - to develop the production space."

› SUPPORTING INDUSTRY GROWTH.

"If Council doesn't respond to this idea of helping people to find physical spaces, we can't really grow the industry. Make it a destination for artists in residence - build on that."

Flexibility to provide more access to our programs

› RESOURCES AND FUNDING.

"Council needs to set the tone that arts and culture is an important part of the community. Make it easier for arts organisations."

› SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

"Tanks has the ability to have more things happening around professional development."

› ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS TO SERVICE.

"Need nice, clear navigable links to finding the cultural services program - How and where we can partner on opportunities?"

Promotion/Marketing/Communication

› CROSS-PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

"More cross-promotion across sector through Council would be good. More support from Council in promotion - like through the Cairns Culture Map."

› EFFECTIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS.

"Council Events Calendar is not very user friendly."

Partnerships & Collaboration - Individuals and groups

› STRATEGIC ALLIANCE AND PARTNERSHIP.

"If Government endorses projects through its various channels, it opens the gate for sponsors and philanthropic organisations to contribute. Endorsement by government creates a certain validity and encourages others to follow."

› NEW MODELS FOR INVESTMENT.

"Council could play a role in providing strategic leadership - something like the cultural gift program. Percentage that's being invested back into arts and culture."



**WHAT THE
ARTIST-RUN INITIATIVES
SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Space for production and exhibition

- › ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE PRODUCTION SPACE.
“Cairns is OK for exhibition space, but there is a significant lack of production space.”
- › ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND FIT-FOR-PURPOSE PRESENTATION SPACE.
“Circa 1907 Gallery - people could create something small and achievable.”
- › SELF-GENERATED INVESTMENT.
“ARIs are a response to the environment in Cairns where artists couldn't get a start in galleries - so people started investing in themselves.”

Youth Arts

- › CREATING THE PATHWAYS.
“There is a massive gap with young people participating in the arts in Cairns - how do we transition young people into the sector?”
- › RETENTION OF YOUNG CREATIVES.
“Cairns is wonderful - supportive, collaborative - but there is the need to go elsewhere for study and other opportunities.”
- › INSPIRING COLLABORATION.
“Young people need to work with other young people.”

Intrinsic value of the arts and culture

- › COLLABORATION AND EXCHANGE.
“The benefits of artists-in-residence - bringing new artists with new ideas is really important.”
- › DETERMINING A QUALITATIVE VALUE.
“How do we capture the data - the intangible aspects of arts consumption - reading a book, waiting at the bus stop looking at Cell Artspace, turning on the radio.”
- › INDICATORS FOR WELLBEING.
“Cultural growth = vibrant community; Community access = strong city; Cultural experiences = enriched lives.”



OPPORTUNITIES

Youth Arts & Skills Development

› EMPOWERMENT AND OWNERSHIP.

“Youth arts programming and participatory activities beyond high school (up to 25) - more ownership of youth events.”

› VALUE ADDING AND LEVERAGE.

“A dedicated youth arts festival within National Youth Week.”

› SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

“Professional development for young people - acquiring and developing their skill before they reach a tertiary level.”

› SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING.

“Dedicated mentoring program to support school leavers - who knows how to hang an exhibition? Succession plan for a new generation of artists.”

Framework for Collaboration - self-led, not Council-controlled but initiated programs

› A CONSORTIUM OR COLLECTIVE OF ARTISTS

“We’ve been talking about it for 20 years but it hasn’t developed any further.”

› SETTING COLLABORATIVE GOALS.

“As a sector and an industry we can’t set people up for failure - there needs to be an established framework - what are we making art for? There is only so much money in the sector; we need to work better together as a sector.”

Building New Audiences for the Arts

› SOCIAL MEDIA AND NEW TECHNOLOGY.

“Opportunities - increased workshops for locals and tourists alike, more public and permanent displays of art incorporated into social media strategy (e.g. IMAGINE installation), programs like Urban Spaces, the Makers Space to build capacity with emerging technologies.”

› NEW MODELS FOR ENGAGEMENT.

“I think we miss opportunities to engage the non-converted. Miss opportunities when we do things like sport. Big opportunities - example, footy game or basketball. Why don’t we have a local band? Why not have projection art? If it was a 10,000 strong crowd and even a hundred people said that they really liked it and sought it out further, there’s a new audience for the arts in Cairns.”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Infrastructure & Production Space

› VITAL ROLE OF COUNCIL.

"Role of Council? Infrastructure, in-kind assistance. Council contributing to lighting, general access to maintenance of the ARI spaces. Wouldn't be that expensive - could bring all those spaces up to a good standard. That show of goodwill from Council would go a long way".

› AFFORDABLE AND PERMANENT PRODUCTION SPACE.

"Need fine arts practice, need studio space, easily accessible, limited cost studio space. We'll survive because we've got jobs. Versatile, small spaces, maybe adjacent to the hub."

› ONGOING INVESTMENT.

"We are lucky with what we have in Cairns, with major facilities. Tanks, Regional Gallery and Munro Martin Parklands - continuation of that is definitely the role of Council."

Celebrating our Uniqueness

› PROVIDING A PLATFORM.

"Provide a platform for the expression of community identities, sense of place and sustainability of our city."

› PROMOTING OUR COLLECTIVE APPEAL.

"Market the region's cultural assets and products - this includes venues and events that are not Council-backed."

Critical Thinkers, Advocacy, bringing people together

› ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIP.

"Businesses don't understand artists, but they do understand Council - is it Council's role to keep managing this program (Urban Spaces)? Perhaps Council becomes an advisory role in this, but managed outside Council by a NFP like KickArts? Council adds weight to these discussions and there is trust in this."

› ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT.

"Support and advocate for an arts community that showcases the beauty and character of our natural environment."

› PLATFORMS FOR COLLABORATION.

"Bringing-people-together opportunities very valuable, such as NAVA's Why Flock? Event."

Leadership and Strategy

› POLICY & STRATEGY SETTING IN COLLABORATION WITH INDUSTRY.

"Strategic direction as to where we're going in 5 years' time. How do we access money? How do we access space?"

› COMMON GOALS.

"We all need to support areas of commonality. Council to be the leader on creating this common goal."

› YOUTH ENGAGEMENT.

"Engage youth with creative activities."



**WHAT THE
INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT
SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Getting back to Grass Roots - Culture is a lifestyle

› PRINCIPLES, PROTOCOL & PROCEDURES FOR ENGAGEMENT.

“You (Council) need to define the word ‘Culture’ as it means different things to different people. Culture to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is lifestyle - it defines the differences.”

Celebrating our uniqueness - Indigenous Culture - Tourism

› DIVERSIFICATION FROM REEF AND RAINFOREST.

“3 R’s - Reef, Rainforest, Rock Art - there is more to this region than reef and rainforest.”

› PLACEMAKING AND URBAN VITALITY.

“It’s about who we are - place making. Cultural tourism benefits from that. TEQ has changed their strategy, about having a Qld experience. Locals love an event or activity or place, and it grows from there.”

OPPORTUNITIES

Celebrating our uniqueness - Indigenous Culture - Tourism

› DEFINING OUR IDENTITY AND UNIQUE POINT OF DIFFERENCE.

“Cairns’ point of difference can be that we embrace our Indigenous community - We can build around it, develop it.”

› A CREATIVE AND CULTURAL HUB.

“Bunnings would be the ideal place for a cultural hub.”

› 2017 NAIDOC WEEK - CAIRNS IS THE HOST CITY.

“It’s going to be in national focus. Local government could best support events like this by allocating funds rather than having grants that groups have to apply for every year, and that see groups compete against each other.”

› PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE.

“We are natural performers and have an ability to share our culture through performance.”

› VALUE-ADDING AND EXPANDING THE LEGACIES.

“We have been talking about [building on the tourism potential of CIAF]. Currently people come to CIAF then they go to the reef. A future concept might be that they go on a day trip to Aurukun - CIAF is the stepping-off point.”

› PRESENTATION AND PROMOTION.

“Lots of work to be done in professionalising our art centres and building quality.”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Partnerships & Collaboration - Individuals and groups

› MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES.

"... like that for the Shields St public art - that worked really well."

› COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

"Council doesn't engage very well, need to show more support for cultural events. Needs to do its bit to close the gap."

› CROSS PROMOTION AND COLLABORATION.

"Council could look at a program of key events - marketing, support, collaboration."

› ADVISORS TO COUNCIL - CONSULTATION.

"Council has a First People's Advisory Committee, which is not specific to the arts - a focused consultation and advisory group around culture and arts matters would be useful."

Infrastructure

› SPACE FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION.

"We need a place to practise our culture and develop our skills. In the communities, there are arts centres, but here, there is nowhere for people to go. We could have our own Bangarra Dance Theatre."

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

› COUNCIL'S ROLE IS IN CONSERVATION

"Giving importance to maintaining and preserving cultural heritage for our people".



**WHAT THE
HERITAGE AND MUSEUM
SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Volunteerism – connecting volunteers with organisations

› AVAILABILITY.

“There is no inexhaustible supply of volunteers - hard to get people involved. Do volunteers have the right skills?”

› FRESH IDEAS.

“We are getting older and we don’t know how many young people are going to come on board. There are possibilities there for people who are talented to come up with new ideas. Might need a bit more mentoring.”

› SKILLS BASE FOR VOLUNTEERS.

“Students coming to volunteer/experience/research need base training to be useful volunteers - Universities need to help manage their students in this volunteering process.”

Conservation, Presentation and Promotion of our Cultural Heritage

› PROTECTING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE.

“Need for more protection of heritage buildings and other heritage assets in the city which are under-appreciated and not adequately protected from development.”

› HERITAGE TOURISM.

“Cairns is an old town, start recognising it as an old town. Tourists are interested. TTNQ has told us that they’re looking for different things to do.”

› DISTINCTIVE HERITAGE.

“It is important that Cairns has its own character to set it apart from all the tourist towns in competition with it. It must be visually attractive and retain some of the characteristics that have been pointed to in the past as distinctively ‘tropical!’”

› DEFINING A SERIES OF INTERPRETIVE THREADS.

“Heritage tourism is an underutilised resource in Cairns. We need better interpretation of Cairns streetscapes and heritage buildings. Rural heritage receives little attention.”

Space

› PRESSING NEEDS.

“There is a very big and urgent need for assistance with storage space; significance of collections; education programs; incentives for volunteers; and marketing.”



OPPORTUNITIES

Interpreting our Stories - heritage tourism

› PRESERVING THE PAST.

“Visual amenity is important - in the Cairns CBD there are many heritage buildings and small heritage precincts which help give Cairns its character.”

› GORDONVALE, THE ESPLANADE & CITY LIBRARY.

“Much more could be done with Gordonvale’s town square; the Esplanade walk; and the city library demonstrating how histories can be told through footpath art and story boards.”

› FNQ CHINESE CULTURAL & HERITAGE CENTRE.

“CADCAI aspires to develop the proposed Far North Queensland Chinese Cultural and Heritage Centre as a well-planned, not-for-profit institution.”

› VISIT OF THE “ENDEAVOUR” IN 2020.

“In 2020 the Endeavour is coming up to Cairns into Endeavour Reef and then up to Cooktown for 250th celebrations.”

Resources & Space

› SUPPORT.

“Museum Development Officer is supported by Council to provide ongoing support to the sector.”

› SHARED OR COMMON AREAS.

“Could there be shared or common area for storage of collections? This might be more cost effective.”

Collaboration

› CREATION OF NETWORK.

“Could we create a collaborative network - similar to the Tablelands network - Get together 3-4 times per year?”

› CROSS-PROMOTION.

“Opportunities to cross-promote - collaborative relationships with libraries and galleries.”

Advocacy & Incentives

› INCENTIVE PROGRAMS.

“Heritage Incentives Program could include: Planning incentives for retention of heritage buildings; heritage advisory services; heritage grants for conservation.”

› SMALL BUSINESSES SEEKING DISTINCTIVE OFFICE BASE.

“Queenslanders have become valued for small business seeking a distinctive office base and can be appropriate homes for small craft business, museums and art galleries.”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Advocacy and leadership in protection and promotion of our cultural heritage

- › HISTORICAL STREET SIGNS.
"Street signs telling the story of who that Street was named after."
- › RECOGNITION OF, AND INCENTIVES FOR VOLUNTEERS.
"Council needs to acknowledge volunteers and the work that they do. Can Council include some kind of incentive for volunteers?"
- › INSUFFICIENT PROTECTION OF HERITAGE.
"Current protection is inadequate - other Councils have put in place much more stringent protections for their heritage buildings."

Storage space and Insurance

- › BLANKET INSURANCE COVER.
"Can Council offer Museums blanket insurance cover?"
- › SHORT-TERM COVER.
"Can Council offer Museums space for short term exhibitions and storage?"

Training and network opportunities

- › PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS.
"Could Council provide professional development/governance seminars? Some do come to town but not affordable to attend."



**WHAT THE
ADVOCACY & ARTS AND
CULTURAL LEADERS SECTOR
SAID...**



PRIORITIES, NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Promotion of Regional Identity

› INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURISM.

“What builds capacity is people coming together, taking risks. No one wants to take risks. That is where funding has to be injected - need to be able to fund those innovative projects. Some will fail, but some will be successful.”

› ARTICULATING AND PROMOTING OUR COMBINED CREATIVITY AND TROPICAL IDENTITY.

“ ‘Tropics’ is a really key word, Tropics of the Imagination – we need to display our uniqueness to the world and own that ourselves.”

› CREATIVE PLATFORMS TO SHOWCASE AND EXPORT OUR UNIQUE CREATIVE TALENT.

“Is there room in Cairns to have an Arts Festival - on shoulders of tourism season? If you had an umbrella arts festival that brought smaller arts activities together, does it then have leverage to get federal and state money?”

Inclusivity, Accessibility and Representation:

› VALUING THE RICH CULTURAL AND CREATIVE DIVERSITY OF THE REGION.

“To get out from underneath the disability banner and be legitimate artists in legitimate spaces. Take away the special – we want to be included.”

› NEW MODELS FOR COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP.

“With Council having such a big presenting arm, where that really affects community is that there’s no room for anyone else’s posters in the limited spaces around town. It seems like a small thing, but it has an effect.”

Mentoring, Training and Education

› BUILDING CAREERS AND ASSISTING ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO GROW PRODUCTIVITY.

“Development of the practitioner to have the information ready to put out there - bringing people to the point where they are market ready could be Arts Nexus’ role.”

› MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS ACCESSIBILITY, MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ENTERPRISE.

“Space is a big need; funding is a major concern . . . There is no longer a space for young creatives to come together.”

› BROADENING THE DEFINITION - INFRASTRUCTURE IS ALSO ABOUT PEOPLE - HUMAN RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE.

“Need more strategic board recruitment. Get some strength into our organisations from retirees - Uni of 3rd Age - people who have those skills.”

Economic Development

› BUILDING A STRONG AND DIVERSE CULTURAL ECONOMY.

“We have the backbone here for something great, but need input from outside to create real employment, eg investment from the film industry. Skills sets are here, but need to create incentives for investment.”

› INVESTING IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL SUPPORT WORLD-CLASS PROGRAMS (INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL).

“Perception now is that it’s challenging to attract people because it’s not easy for them to understand the full cultural ecology of our region.”



OPPORTUNITIES

Information-sharing & Strategy Setting:

› EASILY ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY INFORMATION.

“... at least a monthly calendar of events on the Esplanade, advising of cultural events that are on.”

› STRATEGY SETTING.

“Arts Nexus would like to invigorate the cultural tourism strategy and bring it up to date.”

Solutions & Empowerment:

› DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO BARRIERS IMPACTING ON PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY.

“Roll-out of the NDIS in 2018 will increase jobs across the disability sector; Service providers are looking for opportunities. National Rural Health Conference (April 2017) in Cairns - Arts and health presentations wanted.”

› SUSTAINABILITY AND EMPOWERMENT.

“More State and Federal arts and culture funding managed by an NGO could be the answer to strengthening community ownership and empowerment.”

Training and Skills Development:

› PLATFORMS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING.

“How can RADF assist in addressing that gap as students leave school and keep them engaged in the arts?”

› ECONOMIC, GOVERNANCE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS, MICRO ENTERPRISE AND VOLUNTEERS.

“Have an annual volunteers day - a combination of motivation, training, networking and fundraising.”

Cultural Exchange:

› ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR THE ARTS.

“Host a Cultural Industries conference [at the same time as a designated arts Festival] - get Cairns Chamber of Commerce and TTNQ to buy in.”

› SISTER CITIES RELATIONSHIPS.

“With a designated arts festival - Council gets some connection with a sister city, have that exchange.”



COUNCIL'S ROLE AND WHAT WE COULD DO BETTER

Access & Information Sharing

- › SUPPORTING ACCESSIBLE AND EQUITABLE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.
“Is it accessible? Council needs to consider inclusivity and accessibility indicators in all program and project planning.”
- › ACCESS TO INFORMATION.
“A way that people can get advice on Council's role - a Flowchart of pathways.”

Communication and Promotion:

- › INFORMATION SHARING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE.
“Council needs to get information out well in advance of events and festivals so that other organisations have opportunities to plan/piggy-back.”
- › BUILDING STRONGER CROSS-PROMOTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PLATFORMS
“The sector won't cross-promote - that's a role for Council to be cleverer about building audiences across venues. Build incentives for the organisations to work together and promote each other.”

Investment and Export:

- › FACILITATING A GRANTS PROGRAM THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS.
“CRC's investment in grants is a big thing they could be looking at RADF and contributing 300K a year for grants - developing ARIs, and having more of a program around that.”
- › INVESTMENT IN EXPORT OF OUR CREATIVE TALENT AND CULTURAL PRODUCT.
“Would RADF entertain supporting an umbrella event that supported artists and gave them a showcase that took them beyond regional boundaries and possibly internationally?”



Cairns Regional Council would like to acknowledge the following organisations and individuals who participated in the first phase of consultation:



Advance Cairns
ARC Disability Services
Arts Nexus
Cairns & District Chinese Association Inc. (CADCAI)
Cairns & District Junior Eisteddfod
Cairns & District Woodworkers Guild
Cairns & Region Multicultural Association (CARMA)
Cairns Art Society
Cairns Brass
Cairns Chamber of Commerce
Cairns Choral Society
Cairns Family History Society
Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF)
Cairns Junior Choral Society
Cairns Maritime Museum
Cairns Museum
Cairns Photographic Society
Cairns Potters Club
Cairns Regional Gallery
Cairns RSL
Cairns State High School
Cell Art Space
Central Queensland University
Centre for Australasian Theatre
Centre of Contemporary Arts Cairns
Charles Street
crate59
David Hudson
End Credits Film Club
Eve Stafford
Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC)
Fibrecrafters FNQ

Indigenous Art Centres Alliance (IACA)
Inkmasters
James Cook University
Janice Wegner
Joanna Wills
JUTE Theatre Company
KickArts
Knock Knock Contemporary Artists' Initiative
Leslie Sparkes
Lynda McNamara
Lynn Cropp
Mark Edwards
Michelle O'Loughlin
Mulgrave Settlers Museum
Nigel Pegrum
Red Chair Gallery
Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) Committee
Regional Excellence in Arts and Cultural Hubs (REACH)
Shaneen Fantin
Sue Hayes
TAFE
Terri Golding-Clarke
The Flying Monkey
The Young Company
Theo Tremblay
Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
Tropical Arts
Tropical Writers
UMI Arts
University of the Third Age (U3A)
Urban Spaces group