

Community Engagement Report

Submissions to the Arts and Culture Action
Plan 2023 - 2026



Arts and Culture Action Plan 2023-2026

Online engagement

Community consultation for the Arts and Culture Action plan occurred via a survey hosted online on the Your Say Byron Shire engagement platform. Community members, artists and creatives were invited to share their feedback on the draft Plan over the 30 days public exhibition period from 28 June to 28 July 2023.

The survey was promoted through e-mail distribution, media releases, advertisements in the newspaper and social media. A total of 13 surveys were received, including 25 general submissions. While the data set is small, the feedback has resulted in shifts to some actions and amendments have been made to the Plan.

RESULTS

The first survey question asked respondents if they felt the actions in the Plan would support the intended aims, represented in Figure 1 and below. Almost half of the respondents strongly agreed while the other half stated they were neutral/unsure or disagreed.

The Arts and Culture Action Plan aims to:

- Reflect the scope of the arts and creative industries in the Byron Shire.
- Articulate the role of Council and other organisations in supporting the creative life of the community, in consideration of available resourcing.
- Prioritise actions and areas for investment.
- Attract philanthropic and government support for actions identified.
- Reflect community aspirations for arts and culture.

Do you agree the actions in the plan will support these aims?	Number of responses
Strongly agree	5
Agree	1
Neutral/Unsure	6
Disagree	1

Figure 1. Responses to aims of Arts and Culture Action Plan

Council's role

Respondents were asked to consider the importance of Council's diverse roles in supporting arts and culture, represented in Figure 2.

Capacity building, provision of community infrastructure and staff touchpoints were heavily supported. Council taking on a role to initiate and deliver arts and cultural projects was not as strongly supported.

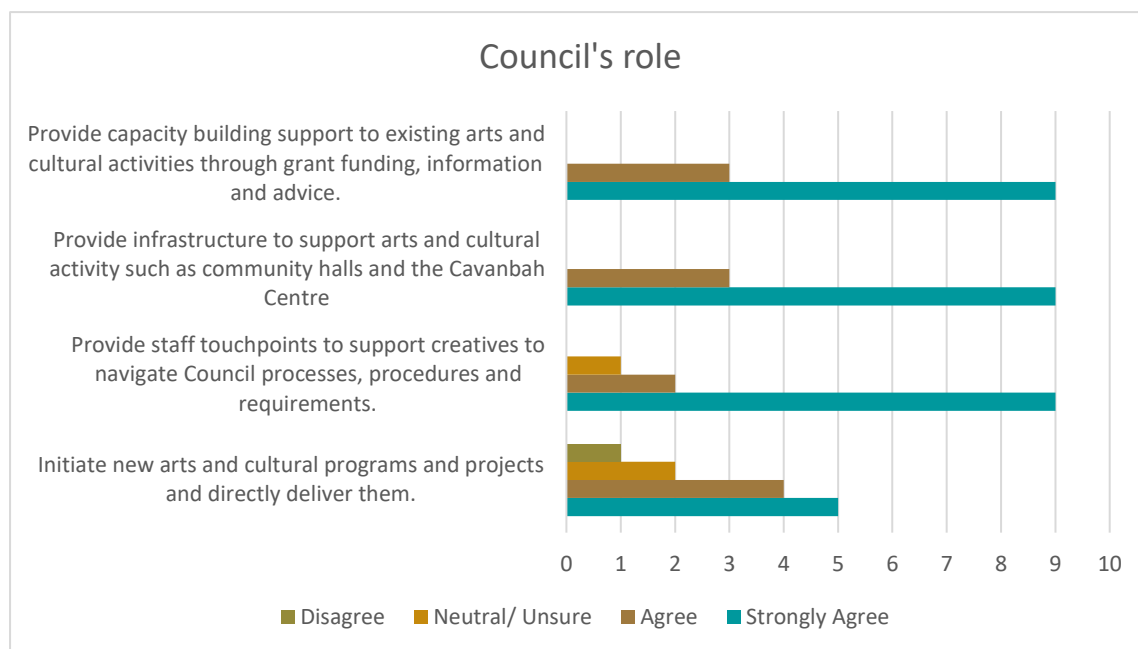


Figure 2. Council's role in supporting arts and cultural activities.

“With limited resources and financial capacity [Council], may not be able to successfully develop and present new programs or events. [Council] may best support a new program or project as an adjunct or expansion of an existing program with increased community participation.

Alternatively, BSC could support new events by hosting sub-committees through ACIAC to initiate any new projects (i.e., festival). This sub-committee could aim to become independent as an incorporated body and seek seed funding from Council to develop further philanthropic or sponsorship monies. Australia Council has funding support for this process”. – Respondent

SUBMISSIONS FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE ACTION PLAN 2023-2026

The table below outlines all comments received, staff responses and recommendations for Council.

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
Administrative		
<p>“World class cultural producers such as Byron Writers Festival and Byron School of Art, Spaghetti Circus, and Brunswick Picture House.”</p> <p>Needs to credit the National Circus Festival as well please.</p>	Supported.	Change incorporated.
<p>Suggest reordering the Priorities section so that 'Acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal voices and stories, communities and, cultural expression and creativity' is first priority listed.</p>	Supported.	Change incorporated.
<p>Check with ████████ re the naming of 'Northern Rivers Writers Centre'. It is my understanding that this entity doesn't exist after the renaming of the organisation to Byron Writers Festival.</p>	Supported.	Change incorporated.

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
Arts infrastructure		
<p>I'd like to see our Community Gallery - The Lone Goat be funded properly and not rely of the artist yet again to pay for showing their work. This is not supporting the artist, but it is supporting the visitors to what is a free entry. It also limits what can be seen in our Gallery. There always seems to be plans of action but not much action as I don't feel there are enough people on council with any great expertise of the arts, in particular the Visual Arts</p>	<p>The Lone Goat Gallery budget was increased this financial year.</p> <p>Waiving exhibitor fees at Lone Goat Gallery is currently under consideration.</p> <p>This comment aligns with the existing action: 1.05 Enhance the profile of the Lone Goat Gallery as a nationally recognised creative facility.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>Under Program Area 1: Arts and Cultural Infrastructure, and Program Area 4: Supporting Festivals, Events & Screen Industry Activity, include activity to: ensure Council is appropriately staffed (specialisation of staff expertise and number of staff) to support delivery.</p>	<p>Council manages staff resources in accordance with identified priorities in its Delivery Program and accompanying resourcing strategy. Acknowledging that the current resourcing provided to support arts and cultural activity is limited, the delivery of the Plan will need to be achieved within existing resources.</p>	<p>No change.</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>I would like to see the roundabouts that are painted to be restored</p>	<p>The roundabouts are currently under discussion with the Arts and Creative Industries Committee and scheduled for renewal.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>Point 1.07 states "support Arakwal corp with their vision to establish a cultural centre". BSC should offer to partner the Arakwal to create a cultural centre for the whole community.</p>	<p>This is an Arakwal-led project. Council's role to provide support and work in collaboration with the Arakwal Corporation and Aboriginal stakeholders. This is an existing action: 1.07 Support Arakwal Corporation with their vision to establish a Cultural Centre.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>There is no strategy for Artist Studio/Housing!!!!</p> <p>If people cannot be accommodated in this area, above or next to their studio, then this area is completely untenable for artists.</p>	<p>Housing and homelessness are primarily the responsibility of state and federal governments. However, as both are key issues for our community, we have a unique role to ensure there is an appropriate supply and mix of housing to meet the community's diverse and changing needs. This continues to be a focus area of our Residential Strategy and our affordable housing initiatives.</p>	<p>No change.</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>The Marvell Hall committee suggest that Council promote the available spaces provided by the community halls for artist in residence programs or creative workshops to further activate these spaces, maybe in the BSC newsletter?</p> <p>A focus article on each hall in turn to acquaint the community with the facilities available to them and the opportunities to activate these spaces with creative activities.</p>	<p>Council plans to explore opportunities for activation of halls and community facilities as part of the Arts and Culture Action Plan and the forthcoming Events Strategy.</p> <p>This will include outlining how these facilities can be used as creative spaces, and for operations, production, and presentation.</p> <p>This action is currently classified as Grow which requires funding, resourcing and reprioritisation to be delivered.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>NORPA submits consideration to other organisations and local councils in the surrounding shires as supporting the creative life of Byron Shire Council community; a collaborative approach is required to ensure resourcing for identified activities in the action plan are not duplicated and instead leveraged where aligned. The most effective approach to achieve this is to clearly identify the distinct, unique opportunities for Byron Shire vs other councils; and the lens into these opportunities is a birds-eye view of the whole region with different needs being met as a whole rather than duplication.</p>	<p>Working collaboratively across the region is central to the Arts and Culture Action Plan. This approach not only avoids duplication but harnesses innovation, efficiency and leads to better community outcomes. This is reflected in action 1.08: Foster new modes of collaboration with industry, government, and philanthropic partners to progress new cultural infrastructure, flexible spaces, and creative precincts in Byron Shire.</p>	<p>No change.</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>NORPA submits consideration to other organisations and local councils in the surrounding shires attracting philanthropic and government support for identified actions; a collaborative approach is required to maximise investment opportunities from state and federal government for the region as a whole. Together we need to nurture a giving culture; and upskill and train workforce to deliver in this space.</p>	<p>Council acknowledges current staffing levels and resourcing across arts and cultural activities and the need for collaboration across the region.</p> <p>Through the Plan and forthcoming Events Strategy, we have identified that Council plays a unique role in creating networking opportunities for arts stakeholders.</p> <p>There is reflected in action 4.07: Foster new modes of collaboration with industry, government and philanthropic partners to progress new cultural infrastructure, flexible spaces and creative precincts in Byron Shire.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>NORPA submits consideration Under Program Area 1: Arts and Cultural Infrastructure to identify the Shire’s creative workforce; firstly, capturing and then tracking its economic contribution to both creative industries and broader sectors in region, its education and training facilities in region, and its retention via capacity building programs to live and work in the region.</p>	<p>Arts Northern Rivers is conducting a major research project mapping the creative industries in the region in partnership with Pattern Makers and Griffith University. Arts and creative industries data will also be captured through the forthcoming Byron Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy.</p>	<p>No change</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>AGREE Provide infrastructure to support arts and cultural activity such as community halls and the Cavanbah Centre.</p> <p>COMMENT The provision or identification of community arts workspace (similar to Lismore Lantern Parade workshop) would be a valuable community asset.</p>	<p>Council plans to explore opportunities for activation of halls and community facilities as part of the Arts and Culture Action Plan and the forthcoming Events Strategy.</p> <p>This will include outlining how these facilities can be used as creative spaces, and for operations, production, and presentation.</p> <p>This action is currently classified as Grow meaning it requires funding, resourcing, and reprioritisation to be delivered.</p>	<p>No change</p>
<p>Reporting</p>		
<p>Encourage awareness of emissions in the production and delivery of arts projects through access to resources such as carbon calculators and offset calculators. There are some examples in the music industry: Green Your Noise - carbon calculator and green resources for musicians (https://www.greenyournoise.com.au).</p>	<p>Council will explore embedding this into future grant funding rounds.</p>	<p>New action:</p> <p>Embed environmental impact measures in grant programs, project development and reporting.</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>NORPA submits consideration to utilising Culture Counts as a key reporting tactic for purposeful evaluation strategies that contribute to the sustainability and long-term success of the action plan's impact.</p>	<p>Council will review Culture Counts as option for tracking progress.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>General comments</p>		
<p>The aims and actions of the plan successfully capture the feedback from the community consultation process. The Arts and Culture Action Plan have the potential to support BSC in achieving community compliance to existing by-laws and guidelines to preserve cultural, aesthetic and environmental values of the region and to increase and improve the arts and creative industries.</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>It often summarises and quantifies the performing arts as one aspect of the arts and culture. It is important to back up statements with facts and clearly identify what is meant by 'performance arts'. I would like to see the 'dance, physical theatre and experimental performance' sector identified in the ACAP. We need to give voice to this sector and not diminish it by excluding it.</p>	<p>The performing arts definition can be clarified and expanded to ensure inclusivity and diversity of arts practices.</p>	<p>Expansion of performing arts definition.</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>'- The proposal appears to be visual arts heavy. I'd like to see all disciplines included equally. Given there are many metrics relating to culture and events in the current strategic plan that have not been met, I'm sceptical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council itself needs full cultural training and a commitment from the top to this if it's going to succeed. Especially the general manager and executive teams. The tone is set from the top. - All departments need to be clued in so organisers can have specific conversations about the unique circumstances of their events. - The events team should not be the gatekeepers to the entire council in processing events applications. It is inefficient and important details are lost in the process. - Councillors need to read the information given to them prior to council meetings relating to these matters so as to not waste peoples' time and make us repeat ourselves. Respect our time. - If the proposal is to work the events team needs to expand. They don't have the capacity to efficiently handle what is in front of them currently. And someone with industry experience needs to be employed. Not just bureaucrats. - The notion to prioritise First Nations art is noble and necessary, however, if it is to be inclusive and create genuine opportunities for 	<p>Council supports the need to expand the number of Aboriginal artists contributing creatively to projects.</p> <p>Other aspects of the submission are noted.</p>	<p>New action:</p> <p>Explore partnership opportunities to enable time on Country for Aboriginal artists.</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>Arakwal/Bundjalung mob first and foremost then the macro issues of housing, cost of living, and jobs need to be considered in this plan.</p> <p>Most local mob can't afford to live on country so this needs to be a collaborative effort with Arakwal corporation and other organisations that can facilitate artists being on country. The alternative is to just keep engaging the same four artists over and over which is tokenistic, cynical, and unfair to other artists who want to share their story and express themselves on their own country.</p> <p>- It all sounds great but for me it's all too late. I've been mentally, emotionally, financially destroyed from the last few attempts at running a cultural event through Byron shire council. I have no desire to contribute to this shires culture anymore after the traumatic experience it was. I've been treated really unfairly, and my mental health has suffered as a result. It's made me want to leave and not come back. I'm actually heartbroken and completely burnt out from the last experience. I hope things change for others but if anyone has to go through what I have the industry will continue to be repelled to even try to produce events here. Good luck to all.</p>		

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>I would like to see the greening continuing. More trees and grassed areas to sit down and breathe. It's all a bit concrete...also a mad idea I've had for a decade.. that will come to pass one day.. ..Gondolas and Gondoliers on the waterways ... it will encourage a clean-up and also police illegal toxins being dumped....they have to be cleared anyway. Anyway just a thought....btw does anyone ever read these?</p>	<p>A creative idea that has not emerged as a priority in past community consultations, and therefore is not part of Council's 4-year Delivery Program or annual operational plan.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>I would like to see Byron Bay have a recycled Christmas tree like the ones Lismore has it doesn't have to represent Christmas it can be called a recycled project</p>	<p>Council offers \$5,000 grants to community groups and organisations each year through the Community Initiatives Program.</p> <p>This year, Christmas Cheer in the Bay, auspiced by the Byron Visitors Centre was funded to deliver a range of festive activities over the Christmas period.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>Thank you for ensuring arts and culture continued to play a strategic role in delivery against key economic and social drivers of this council.</p> <p>Follow through on the previous actions</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p>	<p>No change</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>NORPA POSITIONING STATEMENT:</p> <p>In responding to Byron Shire Council’s Draft Arts and Culture Action Plan, NORPA offers the following positioning statement as alignment to the identified Program Areas in the plan.</p> <p>For 30 years, NORPA has been a maker, a producer, a presenter and a venue manager located in the Northern Rivers region. We have entertained, connected and engaged with our regional audiences, challenging them with the new and the extraordinary, and inspiring them with stories from the country and culture around us.</p> <p>Over the years we have evolved and become more sophisticated in our work, in our business and in our people. The 2022 Lismore floods, leaving us without a home-base in Lismore, has strengthened our resolve to make original theatre that speaks of place and shares stories with the Northern Rivers and beyond. Our vision to build a strong creative ecology for our region remains gloriously untamed.</p> <p>NORPA’s Living Plan for 2025 – 2028 builds upon our model of operation to ensure the organisation’s clarity of purpose to enrich and enhance the lives of our region through great theatre making.</p> <p>Our vision for the future is a NORPA recognised as a leader in making extraordinary place-based work, is agile and sustainable in its operations, and is committed to its region and to delivering outcomes for artists and stakeholders.</p>	<p>If community facilities and buildings become available, Council generally undertakes a competitive expression of interest process to ensure equity, fairness, and transparency. Following this process licences are often awarded for a five-year period.</p> <p>Council notes NORPA’s interest in discovering a potential new home. If an opportunity emerges that aligns with this vision, we will update NORPA and share details of the tender or EOI process.</p>	<p>No change.</p>

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>NORPA submits our following strategic pillars, and associated key activities, will deliver directly to the action plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theatre without Walls: Best practice site-specific and devised theatre; 2. Engaged Communities: Building community wellbeing through place-based theatre making; 3. Future Ready: An Organisation equipped to adapt and respond; and 4. Reputation: Bringing value to our region through our distinct position in Australia’s national cultural landscape. <p>Further, the loss of our presenting and making venue in the 2022 floods has left an enormous gap in the cultural life and related economic and social activity for Lismore and the region. Although this presents a significant challenge for NORPA, the NORPA Board and management are viewing this time as an opportunity to re-think its position and direction in the Northern Rivers. As creating and delivering place-based theatre-making is a strategic pillar in our strategic Living Plan, we are excited to explore unique opportunities to engage our community and visitor audiences across the region. As a passionate player in the cultural economy of the region, NORPA is participating in several studies, visioning and planning exercises that will help define our future and the region’s future with cultural output. This includes investigations into a new home for NORPA and growing its vision for site-specific theatre making and presentation.</p>		

Comment	Response	Council Recommendation
<p>NEUTRAL/UNSURE Initiate new arts and cultural programs and projects and directly deliver them.</p> <p>COMMENT With limited resources and financial capacity BSC, may not be able to successfully develop and present new programs or events. BSC may best support a new program or project as an adjunct or expansion of an existing program with increased community participation. Alternatively, BSC could support new events by hosting sub-committees through ACIAC to initiate any new projects (ie festival). This sub-committee could aim to become independent as an incorporated body and seek seed funding from Council to develop further philanthropic or sponsorship monies. Australia Council has funding support for this process.</p> <p>EXTRA COMMENT Please see attachment Australia Council for the Arts FAQ re Community Arts and Cultural Development.</p>	<p>Acknowledging the impressive arts and creative industries sector, Council's focus is on supporting and enabling arts activities rather than directly delivering, unless otherwise identified and prioritised by the community through our integrated planning and reporting framework.</p>	<p>No change</p>
<p>The Creative Industries Recovery Forum report had three artistic streams identified as most in need - Public Art, Indigenous Art and Dance, Physical Theatre and Experimental Performance. Supported by Arts Northern Rivers, the Dance Sector Uplift project is a research project designed to identify and reactivate the sector. It is currently its 3rd stage of public consultation which is collating data from the Dance Sector Uplift Yarning Circle (DSU YC) and the Survey (DSU S). Please contact [REDACTED] for more information.</p>	<p>While identified as an area of interest during the Forum, Council has limited ability to lead artform specific initiatives as our remit is across art and culture broadly.</p>	<p>No change.</p>



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