

Mayoral Message

It is exciting to be presenting Ballina Shire's first Cultural Plan. This plan is an acknowledgment that as a community we continue to grow and diversify and as this happens it is important that we understand and respect the many components that make up the culture of our community.

One of the many strengths of this plan is the high level of community involvement in its compilation. Residents from across the Shire area, representing a wide range of ages and cultural interests have painted a clear picture of Ballina Shire's cultural strengths, which are the basis of the plan's vision and objectives.

These objectives not only provide a strategic direction to build the cultural activity that truly reflects who we are, but they also distinguish our community from other neighbouring council areas. *Our Community : Our Culture* will also help to sustain the cultural activity we invest in so as to foster greater community wellbeing and to benefit the many visitors to the Shire.

Importantly, *Our Community : Our Culture* is also shaped by the principles of community sustainability, equity and access. This means we have a plan that reflects who we are, yet there is room to grow and improve our cultural attributes. The plan is encouraging and enabling of the whole community to instigate and foster cultural activity; it is inclusive of diverse cultural activity interests: and it seeks to provide everyone with the opportunity to participate in cultural activity in the Shire.

As a Council we look forward to working with the community to realise the opportunities *Our Community : Our Culture* has identified and the future Ballina Shire it envisages.

Cr David Wright
Mayor Ballina Shire

Acknowledgement of Country

Ballina Shire Council acknowledges that we are here on the land of the Bundjalung people. The Bundjalung are the traditional owners of this land and are part of the oldest surviving continuous culture in the world.

With thanks

Council would like to thank the following people and organisations for contributions made to developing *Our Community : Our Culture*.

Arts Northern Rivers for facilitating the cultural and creative industries stakeholders' focus group and feedback during preparation of the plan.

Focus group participants and community members who completed the postcard, online and hard copy surveys.

Organisations and individuals who contributed photographs in addition to those provided by Council. Arts Northern Rivers, Alstonville Plateau Historical Society, The Blackwall Historical Society, Richmond River Historical Society, Ballina Arts and Craft Centre Inc., Ballina Players, Michael Aird, Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council, Ballina Arts and Craft Centre Incorporated, Terry Ferguson, Tony Partridge, Murray Views and Craig Parry.



Our Community : Our Culture and sustainability

Our Community : Our Culture is the Ballina Shire's first cultural plan. Fostering community sustainability underlies the Plan's vision and objectives. To this end, it emphasises strengthening the visibility of our local cultural attributes and the opportunities for both Council and the community to develop and hold cultural activity across our Shire.

In line with community sustainability also, *Our Community : Our Culture*'s objectives foremost seek to maximise the use of our existing cultural resources and programs. These objectives also highlight the opportunity to improve, and initiate new community partnerships to develop and deliver cultural activity throughout the Shire. Encouraging cultural activity that is shaped by various community interests is also considered important to its accessibility across our community – including children, young people, older people, families and the various cultural backgrounds represented in our Shire. Accessibility of cultural activity to people with disability needs is also seen as important.

Our Community : Our Culture sits under Council's overarching Community Strategic Plan – Our Community: Our Future 2013- 2023. Our Community: Our Future identifies 'connected community' as one of its four key planning directions. Fostering cultural activity is one way to achieve this, and other broader community planning goals. Council recognises that having access to cultural activity results in important social and economic outcomes. These benefits include a more vibrant community life and increased community pride and well-being, to the greater opportunities and employment for community residents working in cultural and creative industries.

Cultural activity in our community

Culture or cultural activity is often understood as being associated with creativity or the arts. *Our Community : Our Culture* has embraced a broader range of cultural activity and include our outdoor environments, sense of a place and sport.

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 its particular character as a place. A broad definition of cultural activity reflects the diversity of cultural activity interests in our Shire community.

What we have - our existing cultural assets

Below is a summary of the Shire's key cultural activity assets which have been identified through our cultural plan process. These assets reflect the varied type of cultural activity considered in preparing this plan. In turn our cultural assets reflect the nature of the Ballina Shire community, that each of us values different cultural activity and for different reasons. *Our Community : Our Culture* has considered whether these assets meet our current needs for cultural activity and how they might be utilised better by the whole community to develop and hold cultural activity.

- Our Shire embraces diverse and iconic natural areas, systems and scenery.
- We have a community art gallery, its programming has a local and regional focus and has strong volunteer support.
- We have a proportionately high population of artists and craftspeople within the Shire (and regionally), including Aboriginal artists and craftspeople.

- We have a Public Art Policy and a growing public art asset.
- Council supports and/or co-ordinates an annual calendar of community events including Australia Day, Heritage Festival, NAIDOC, Youth and Seniors Week events. Council also has a Festival Event Support Program which annually grants funds for local community organisations to hold events.
- The Shire is rich in highly valued Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and Aboriginal community organisations supporting our Aboriginal community and culture.
- The Shire has several community based historical societies and volunteer run museums holding important document and object collections relating to the history of our Shire areas. We also have several heritage trails throughout the Shire.
- We have a number of community environmental care organisations including Landcare and dune care groups.
- A number of community based arts organisations, as well as a regional arts body – Arts Northern Rivers – service the region to foster and promote local and regional arts based cultural activities.
- Cultural activity, including events and festivals in the Shire, is strongly supported by community groups, community partnerships and individual volunteers, many of whom are seniors.
- Ballina, Lennox Head and Alstonville are serviced by community centres which run cultural activity programs.
- Ballina has an outdoor amphitheatre which accommodates varied outdoor community events.
- Alstonville, Lennox Head and Ballina are serviced by public library facilities.
- The Shire has a growing network of recreational walkways and cycle ways, and is well serviced by public parks and sporting fields.

- Ballina and Alstonville have public pool facilities.
- Varied sporting groups in the Shire provide for both children and adult sports. We also have well serviced sporting fields and parks across the Shire.
- 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, restaurant and regional cuisine culture.
- Alstonville, Lennox Head and Ballina hold regular community markets and Ballina and Alstonville have a weekly farmer’s market.
- A number of our Shire’s smaller settlements have a historic public hall which are the focal point for locality based cultural activities.
- Both public and denominational schools service the Shire’s primary and secondary education needs; while tertiary or adult education services include TAFE, community college and U3A programs.
- Most communities throughout the Shire are serviced by the various Christian churches – Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Uniting.
- Significant numbers of people in the Shire work across the cultural and creative industries – including in film and television, architecture and design, fashion, music and performing arts, and writing and publishing.

What we value - culture does matter

The challenge of preparing a cultural plan is to balance the varied needs and desires of the community concerning cultural activity. To assist prioritising the cultural activity needs of our community a community consultation process was undertaken centring on the question: does culture matter? Principally, community feedback sought to determine what the community valued most, and whether its cultural activity needs are being met. Community responses were obtained by various means including a postcard survey, online survey and focus groups. ¹

Responses indicated that our Shire community participates in a wide variety of cultural activity, both within and outside the Ballina Shire area. Most of us also participate in cultural activity on a weekly or fortnightly basis, indicating its prominence in our day-to-day lives. The highest ranking reasons as to why we value cultural activity were: it brings the community together, is intellectually and emotionally stimulating, creative need, and to feel part of the community. The majority of us are also very satisfied to satisfied (57%) with the cultural activity available to us in the Shire. While many of us also indicated that we leave the Shire to participate in cultural activity, we also suggested we do not expect to have all the cultural activity we desire in our Shire given the nature of our community.

We also indicated our highest ranking cultural activity strengths are our use of the natural environment and other outdoor environments (such as walkways and cycle ways), cafes, cinema and the library. We also highly value our heritage – including

¹ See Appendix 1 for further community consultation details.

our Aboriginal heritage; our community farmers' markets, galleries and museums, and arts and crafts. Though we expressed dissatisfaction with, and indicated gaps in the Shire's cultural activity, on the whole we indicated we value the Shire's cultural attributes because of the outdoor, and easy-going lifestyle these support.

Opportunities for future cultural activity in our Shire

Community responses also indicated both a strong correlation between the cultural activity we value most and what could be most improved. There were also other areas of cultural activity identified as needing improvement. Consequently, the environment and open spaces, cycle ways and walkways, Aboriginal culture and arts and crafts, community events, community facilities and sense of place ranked highest amongst the areas of cultural activity that our community considered could be most improved. The better promotion of cultural activity in the Shire, as well as greater collaboration between Council, community groups and others, is also seen as key to enhancing the delivery of cultural activity across the Shire.

The desire to better value and harness the actual, and potential, contribution of all our community in developing and holding cultural activity and improve the accessibility of cultural activity to Shire residents, including young and older people, is felt particularly important.

Reading and using *Our Community : Our Culture*

Our Community : Our Culture is designed to be a flexible plan, meaning it lays out a foundation upon which to grow the cultural activity in our community overtime. Importantly, it is a framework which identifies the key areas our community has said it values most to guide the future development of cultural activity in the Shire. It therefore contains the following elements to assist Council, and the community, in directing the growth of cultural activity throughout our Shire.

Firstly it sets out a vision, an all-encompassing statement about how we want to see cultural activity develop in the Shire. This vision is based on what our community indicated it presently values, as well as what it desires in relation to future cultural activity.

Reflecting our cultural vision, five cultural activity Objectives embrace the key areas we value most, and wish to improve or develop. For each of our cultural activity objectives an explanation is given highlighting the attributes and strengths of this objective, and its value to our community, to help us see how to work toward this objective.

'Opportunities' indicate the measures we will work towards to meet our objectives. *'Potential Projects'* are suggested ways we can meet each objective and are based on what the community has suggested or Council has identified. For each objective the *'Cultural activity we will build on'* and *'How Council fosters this objective'* are also indicated to demonstrate what we currently have and do regarding cultural assets and activity.

At Appendix 2, each potential project is coded to indicate how this type of cultural activity is, or may be resourced. Potential Projects are coded in accordance with the following:

R – indicates a cultural activity or project is currently resourced by Council that meets this project idea

ER – indicates the activity/project may be achieved through existing resources allocated by Council

AR – indicates that the project requires additional resources to be achieved by either Council or the community

Some potential projects have been given more than one of these codes, for instance indicating that the activity is currently resourced (R) as well as requires additional resources (AR). This is to show that this type of cultural activity, or project, may be undertaken more than once and carried out in different ways over time. For example coding may show that while a single place-making project may be currently resourced, for another to take place it will require additional resources beyond those already allocated.

Appendix 3 provides an overview of the responses to the postcard and online survey.

OUR CULTURAL VISION



Our cultural vision stems from what the community has said it values and wants concerning current and future cultural activity across the Shire.

Our culture reflects us, is shaped by and for us.

Our vision embraces the following elements:

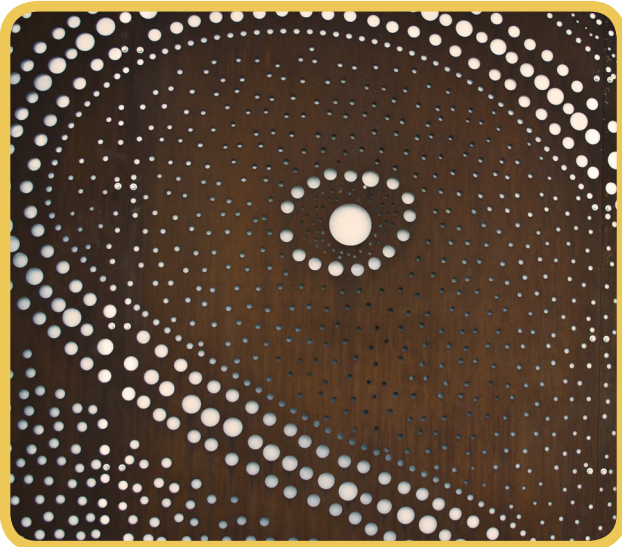
- Our natural environment is a defining cultural asset – it underpins the lifestyle we value.
- We want to see ourselves in our community. To know and see our past in the natural and built environments around us, and see it reflected in the creative endeavours and cultural events held in our community.
- We want to be participants in shaping the cultural activity we engage in.
- We want to be able to access the cultural activity we value, and share it with others to enhance its value to our community.

North Creek arm of the Richmond River

The river represents our cultural vision given the significance of the environment to us. Our community considers the natural environment to be one of our greatest cultural strengths as it underpins our outdoor lifestyle. The importance of the environment reaches across all ages and interests in our Shire. Symbolically, the image represents the path toward enriching our local cultural attributes, and our expressed desire to have our culture reflect who we are as a community presently, and into the future.

(image Terry Ferguson)

OUR CULTURAL OBJECTIVES



Reflecting our cultural vision, the following are our cultural activity objectives:

Sense of Place: Foster cultural activity that promotes the heritage, stories and unique features that are the Ballina Shire.

Aboriginal Culture: With the Shire's Aboriginal community, promote understanding of local Aboriginal identity, culture and heritage.

Great Outdoors: Care for, or enhance, our natural and other outdoor environments which underpin our special lifestyle.

Art Smart: Encourage and support our creative industries to be sustainable and accessible.

Cultural Space: Better utilise our existing cultural infrastructure, as well as respond to changing needs, to hold and encourage cultural activity.

Family Fun: Shape our cultural image and infrastructure to reflect a family friendly place for all of us to live and others to visit.

Photo credits to the left, viewing clockwise: Digby Moran's shop front art installation, Woolworths, River Street, Ballina (*Image* Ballina Shire Council); Mavis Davies celebrating her contribution to the Object of the Story project, Northern Rivers Regional Gallery (*Image* Michael Aird); Looking north at Boulder's Beach (*Image* Terry Ferguson); Young people examine local artworks at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Ballina (*Image* Ballina Shire Council); Ballina Surf Life Saving Club at Lighthouse Beach, East Ballina (*Image* Craig Parry); School holiday workshops at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery (*Image* Ballina Shire Council).

SENSE OF PLACE

Foster cultural activity that promotes the heritage, stories and unique features that are the Ballina Shire.

Knowing and engaging with our past is valued highly and underlies our 'sense of place'. As Shire residents, together we all contribute to building our ongoing sense of place. To appreciate our built environment and cultural landscape we need to know and understand the stories it represents.

Areas of our Shire contain built and other features that reflect our unique rural history, the growth of our towns and villages and the people and communities who have shaped our past, hence our present sense of place.

Aboriginal cultural heritage is reflected throughout the Shire landscape. Aboriginal sites in the Shire are registered with the NSW State Government, and managed with the local Aboriginal community.

Many other items and places are listed on Council's Local Environmental Plan as items of environmental heritage. These contribute to the built character of our towns and villages given their historic aesthetic – or look.

The Shire has several community based historical societies and volunteer run museums holding important historic document and object collections relating to the Shire, that contain our stories of place. Stories of place can form part of the cultural activity we engage in – including community events, exhibitions, public art and using public spaces.

Cultural activity we will build on...

Organisations that are the custodians of the Shire's historic documents and objects include the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society; Lennox Head Heritage Committee and the Blackwall Historical Society at Wardell. The Richmond Tweed Family History Society holds genealogical records relating to the region & the Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum tells the important story of the Port of Ballina.

In 2013 Council partnered with Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council to develop The Object of the Story exhibition at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery. The exhibition featured contemporary portraits and stories of Aboriginal community members and their connection to place.

Local planning frameworks that recognise the character and special attributes of places in the Shire.

Lennox National Surfing Reserve is an area of coastal water that have been recognised by National Surfing Reserves Australia (NSRA) and the NSW Department of Lands as iconic sites of environmental, cultural and historical significance to the Australian surfing culture.

Photo credits to the right, viewing clockwise: Looking across the Richmond River to the old school room and manager's cottage at Cabbage Tree Island, c. 1910 (*Image* Richmond River Historical Society); Locals and visitors enjoying a Surf Carnival at Lighthouse Beach, c. 1960s (*Image* Ballina Shire Council); Aerial view of Ballina (*Image* Ballina Shire Council); Historic rural scene, Meerschaum Vale, c. 1940s (*Image* Ballina Shire Council).



SENSE OF PLACE continued

Opportunities

Encourage community based activities and events that engage with our history and local collections/museums, as well as artists and performers to tell these stories.

Strategically plan for new interpretation of the Shire's natural and cultural heritage values, which complies with best practice interpretation guidelines, complements existing interpretation and is innovative or creative.

Continue to foster the retention of our historic built environment, through conservation or adaptive re-use.

Continue to promote and support the Shire's historical societies, museums and natural environment organisations to conserve our local stories and heritage.

Seek funding to contribute to place making projects.

Support community groups to co-ordinate local or Shire-based cultural activity.

Foster or strengthen community or regional partnerships to hold cultural activity reinforcing our sense of place.

How Council fosters this objective...

Council's 2012 Local Environmental Plan (LEP) lists local heritage items and places in the Ballina Shire.

In 2012 Council supported the declaration of East Ballina Aboriginal Place under the National Parks and Wildlife Act in acknowledgement of its heritage values to the Shire and its Aboriginal community.

Council's Signage Taskforce plans for and develops signage throughout the Shire to foster local identity and the interpretation of our local stories and heritage values.

Council's Public Art Policy encourages works that promote our local sense of place and the policy is implemented through an advisory panel.

The Northern Rivers Community Gallery promotes exhibitions and workshops by local artists and craftspeople through its focus on high quality local and regional based programming.

Established Council guidelines for running events in the Ballina Shire.

Potential Projects

- Establish character statements for our Shire settlements.
- Interpret our places through public art and within public spaces to enhance their aesthetic, use and vibrancy.
- Assist our community groups to source grant funding to hold cultural activity and community events that promote our heritage, stories and unique features.
- Hold grant writing workshops focusing on funding to develop and hold cultural activity or sense of place projects.
- With our historical societies and museums, promote best practice conservation, as well as the use of our community historical collections for everybody.
- Explore a themed program connecting all our museums and historical societies in the Shire and promote this through joint advertising at visitor centres and online.
- Work with Arts Northern Rivers to develop and conduct a survey of our Shire's museums and history groups to understand the needs and priorities for the sector.
- Establish an ongoing oral history recording program for our Shire area.
- Map the Shire's cultural assets to promote cultural activity that fosters sense of place within our community and to visitors.
- Shire-based festivals that embrace the objectives of this plan.

Photo credits top to bottom: Travelling north and overlooking Lennox Head, c. 1960s (*Image Ballina Shire Council*); Main Street Alstonville, c. 1940s (*Image Ballina Shire Council*); Meerschaum Vale School Picnic, c. 1900 (*Image Blackwall Historical Society*).



ABORIGINAL CULTURE

With the Shire's Aboriginal community, promote understanding of local Aboriginal identity, culture and heritage

Our Aboriginal community includes Bundjalung families who are the traditional custodians of the Ballina Shire area. Custodianship of the Ballina Shire by Bundjalung peoples dates back at least 6000 years. As indigenous people, Aboriginal people hold a unique place in our Shire.

Aboriginal families live predominantly in Ballina and at Cabbage Tree Island. Together, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent 3.1% of the total Shire population. This figure represents both Bundjalung families and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples.

The Ballina Shire landscape contains important Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and features that contribute to our unique history, and are important to the identity and culture of the Shire's Aboriginal community today. The acknowledgement of contemporary Aboriginal identity, history, culture and presence in the community is as important to our Aboriginal community as acknowledging the more distant past.

Appreciating the significance of the historic and contemporary landscape to the Shire's Bundjalung people can enhance all our experience of the Shire. Ballina's Bundjalung stories also have regional significance, given the breadth of the Bundjalung Nation – ranging from the Clarence River in the south to the Tweed River in the north.

Cultural activity we will build on...

Council partners with Aboriginal community representatives to hold National NAIDOC Week celebrations annually in the Shire. A key activity held is the Celebration Walk along River Street Ballina. The walk symbolises the survival of Aboriginal people and culture in our community.

The Shire's Salt Water Women art group proudly display contemporary work in Council's Customer Service Centre foyer depicting key symbols that reflect Bundjalung people's heritage and connection to the Ballina Shire.

Arts Northern Rivers' Indigenous Arts Development Officer works with the region's Aboriginal communities to foster and support Aboriginal arts and artists, as well other cultural activity and projects.

Photo credit right: People of the Reeds, Cabbage Tree Island
(Image Frangipani Creative with permission from Arts Northern Rivers).



ABORIGINAL CULTURE continued

Opportunities

Continue to collaborate with Aboriginal community representatives to celebrate and develop NAIDOC Week.

Continue to showcase local and regional Aboriginal artists at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.

Continue to support and work with Arts Northern Rivers to foster Aboriginal creative and cultural activity.

Form ongoing partnerships with the Shire's Aboriginal groups to develop and fund new cultural activity to promote their identity, culture and heritage.

Support Aboriginal community groups to develop and/or hold cultural activity that promotes their identity and culture in the Shire.

Develop an agreement with Aboriginal community representatives on protocols for promoting Aboriginal culture of the Ballina Shire.

How Council fosters this objective...

Acknowledge protocols important to the Aboriginal community that signify we value their culture and heritage including flying the Aboriginal flag and holding an Acknowledgement of, or Welcome to, Country at important meeting times or public events.

Hold and resource an Aboriginal Community Committee to advise on Council business that is relevant to our Aboriginal community.

Work with Aboriginal community representatives to promote their identity, culture and heritage at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.

Work with the Shire's Aboriginal community to support and promote National NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Council's Naming of Roads Bridges and Public Places and Public Art policies advocate dual naming and public art to reinforce our local-place identity and heritage values, including Aboriginal entity and heritage.

Potential Projects

- ➔ Collaborate with our Shire business community to promote NAIDOC Week and the Shire's Aboriginal culture.
- ➔ Increase the involvement of our Shire's schools in NAIDOC Week celebrations.
- ➔ Share Aboriginal culture and stories through public art projects in prominent locations.
- ➔ Hold local Aboriginal music and dance performances.
- ➔ Collaborate with Elders and theatre groups to tell Aboriginal stories.
- ➔ Promote opportunities and partnerships to establish a Cultural Centre or Keeping Place.
- ➔ Work with Aboriginal community representatives to increase dual place naming throughout the Shire.
- ➔ Work with the Northern Rivers Community Gallery to develop an Aboriginal Art Prize .
- ➔ Collaborate with Aboriginal community members to care for and interpret the natural and cultural landscape.



Photo credits top to bottom: Nancy Walke reads to children at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery (*Image* Ballina Shire Council); Jingee Walla (Welcome) signage at the Cabbage Tree Island boardwalk (*Image* Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council); Celebrating NAIDOC Week at the Annual NAIDOC Celebration Walk, Ballina (*Image* Tony Partridge and by permission of Tammy and Brenda Kapeen).

GREAT OUTDOORS

Care for, or enhance, our natural and other outdoor environments which underpin our special lifestyle

Our community places the highest cultural value on the natural environment and other outdoor environments, as these features underpin our lifestyle. These include conservation areas, beaches and foreshores, parks, walkways and cycle ways. Wharves and jetties enable boating and fishing activities.

The Shire has a total land area of over 480 square kilometres, including significant areas of scenic iconic coastline. The Richmond River is a central feature of Ballina's 'setting' and it bisects the floodplains to the south of the Shire; the village of Wardell also sits on its edge. Volcanic red soil hills are a feature of much of the Shire's hinterland and plateau and continue to support pockets of remnant 'Big Scrub' rainforest. A further feature of the hinterland is the scenic Blackwall Range, providing a backdrop view from most of the Shire's coastline. Lake Ainsworth at Lennox Head is also a prominent environmental feature of the Shire.

While our rural land is predominantly used for cropping, grazing, fruit and macadamia nut production, it has strong scenic qualities attributable to its natural topography. Ballina Shire is within a region of towns and villages which also enjoy rural and scenic settings.

Approximately one third of the land in the Shire is zoned for environmental protection inclusive of several National Park and Nature Reserve areas. The whole environmental landscape of the Shire forms part of a broader cultural landscape, which reflects the history of the Shire, the people and cultures that have shaped it.

Cultural activity we will build on...

Across the whole of the Ballina Shire a number of Landcare and Dunecare organisations operate to care for coastal, estuarine and plant community environments. These organisations are volunteer-run by Shire residents.

Dedicated shared paths, for pedestrians and bikes, are in place across the Shire and include the 11.5km 'Ballina Loop'. The currently proposed Coastal Recreational Pathway and Shared Path will link Ballina to Lennox Head.

Ballina Shire has a large number of local, district and regional parks. The Shire's parks are subject to regular management and ongoing upgrading and embellishment.

Strategic planning for open spaces and conservation management across the Shire.

The upgrade of the Lennox Head Recycled Wastewater Treatment Plant and Ballina Recycled Wastewater Treatment Plant will reduce waste water and nutrient loads entering waterways.

Photo credit right: World Environment Day at Lennox Headland (Image Tony Partridge and Ballina Shire Council).



GREAT OUTDOORS continued

Opportunities

Continue to promote the environmental care of our natural and outdoor areas to ensure access and enjoyment by current and future generations.

Continue to advocate for the conservation of vulnerable ecosystems, plant communities and species.

Improve the interpretation of our natural heritage (including fauna) throughout the Shire and foster its value as part of the broader-Shire cultural landscape, including the Aboriginal cultural landscape.

Appreciate the different environments we have – rural, urban, coastal, farming, hinterland and ‘bush’.

Promote our river as a living entity that links to other natural living communities and places.

Manage and promote the attributes and accessibility of Council’s managed open spaces and reserves across all age groups and other special needs.

Celebrate our environment through cultural activity held in the Shire – including through exhibitions, public art and family based events.

How Council fosters this objective...

Consistently improve Council’s environmental performance through the Climate Action Strategy, Environmental Action Plan, State of Environment reporting; and in which Council, the community and individuals can participate.

Council’s Play Equipment Installation Program guides the upgrade and embellishment of many of the Shire’s parks.

Promote the regular and safe use of our shared pathways and are planning for their expansion.

Promote the heritage of our natural assets. Council’s ‘Flood Photos Gallery’ project has compiled a series of historic photos illustrating the flooding history of the Richmond River – an important facet of the river’s natural cycle as well as the Shire’s social history and heritage.

Manage our natural areas collaboratively with Landcare, Coastcare, community and other non-government organisations.

Promote care of our natural environment including feral plant and animal management.

Plan for the management and embellishment of public open space and environmental assets through Master and Management Plans.

Potential Projects

- ➔ Establish heritage and nature based trails to explore and experience the environmental values of our Shire.
- ➔ Develop interpretive signage that is child friendly and interactive.
- ➔ Explore funding opportunities for the maintenance and rehabilitation of our environment.
- ➔ Undertake a community based environmental education program focussed on the environmental and cultural values of the Richmond River.
- ➔ Promote the care and stories of our natural environment through creative activity, local history collections and at community events.
- ➔ Establish and promote an award for Environmental Citizen of the Year.
- ➔ Map our natural vegetation and its values.
- ➔ Plant street trees to enhance our sense of place, select native or endemic species where appropriate.
- ➔ Publicise Council's water quality data results.

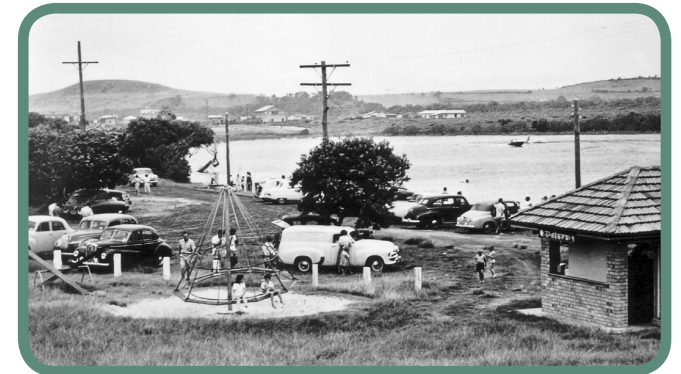


Photo credits top to bottom: Lake Ainsworth, Lennox Head, c. 1950s (*Image Murray Views*); Walking Group, Richmond River (*Image Ballina Shire Council*), Big Fig, Victoria Park, Alstonville, c. 1930s (*Image Richmond River Historical Society*).

ART SMART

Encourage and support our creative industries to be sustainable and accessible

We live in a region that, outside of Sydney, has the highest density of creative workers per capita. Many creative industries workers live in our Shire community. Recreation and the arts demonstrates an increasing contribution to the region's economic performance, with the region having the highest creative industry employment growth in the State.

Our community values our creative strengths and has a desire to increase its participation in, and access to, creative activity. This will fuel local opportunities for the growth of our creative industries.

Our creative industries sector is supported by Arts NSW's regional peak body Arts Northern Rivers. Arts Northern Rivers supports regional arts and cultural development to build sustainable futures for our creative industries. Council provides co-funding support to Arts Northern Rivers programs. A number of community based arts organisations also underpin the Shire's growing creative industries.

The Northern Rivers Community Gallery is highly valued and pivotal to fostering creative activity and its accessibility in our Shire. Housed in the former Ballina Municipal Council Chambers building, it provides a unique and important space for local artists across the Shire, and region, to exhibit and sell their works. It has a growing education and professional development program, as well regional audience. It is recognised as a regional cultural asset with the potential to serve as a hub for even greater diverse creative activity.

Making creative activity accessible to our whole Shire community – including young and Aboriginal people as well as our seniors and disability communities – is central to reaping its social value potential and nurturing its sustainability. Working with, or supporting, artists and others in our community to grow creative activity fosters its accessibility, as well its diversity. The social benefit of creative activity in the Shire is also reflected in the number of our Shire residents who volunteer to support it, including many of our seniors.

Cultural activity we will build on...

The Shire has a number of active community based arts organisations that foster and promote visual arts in the Shire (see Ballina Shire Community Directory).

We have a strong base of resident artists and other creatives from across a growing creative industries sector.

Arts Northern Rivers' support and advocacy of sustainable creative industries across the Northern Rivers Region.

In 2012 Accessible Arts NSW launched its Connecting Communities Program at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery. This program aims to help artists living with a disability to gain access to mainstream opportunities.

Photo credit right: Contemplating Digby Moran's 'Someone's Always Looking at You', Northern Rivers Community Gallery, (Image Ballina Shire Council).



ART SMART continued

Opportunities

Continue to work with Arts Northern Rivers to foster and promote the sustainability and accessibility of the Shire, and region's, creative industries sector.

Continue to support and develop a diverse and engaged creative community via a distinctly local program of exhibitions, public programs and events at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.

Support community groups and business to promote creative activity.

Enhance promotion of the Shire's creative industries to interstate and other visitors.

Continue to reactivate the Northern Rivers Community Gallery as a central hub for creative activity in the Shire and region.

Utilise grant funds to complement regional-based programming at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.

Explore new ways to promote creative activity in the Shire including adopting creative activity to assist in achieving Council's Community Strategic Plan goals.

How Council fosters this objective...

Council funds the Northern Rivers Community Gallery to promote local history, stories, cultures and creative development.

The Northern Rivers Community Gallery provides an important Shire-based outlet for regional artists to sell their works.

Along with Arts NSW and other regional Shires, Council co-funds the regional arts body, Arts Northern Rivers to support and advocate for creative industries across the region, including the Ballina Shire.

Work with the Shire's Aboriginal community to hold the Annual NAIDOC Week Exhibition, showcasing Shire-based and regional Aboriginal artists.

Implement the Northern Rivers Community Gallery Strategic Plan.

Potential Projects

- ➔ Collaborate with local business to support or sponsor creative activity in the Shire.
- ➔ Promote opportunities for collaboration across the arts, environment and community education needs.
- ➔ Work with Arts Northern Rivers to establish a Northern Rivers Creative Pop Up project in Ballina to showcase a selection of creative industries in the Shire.
- ➔ Explore flexible shared workspaces for artists and arts learning.
- ➔ Explore local histories and issues through art exhibitions and programs.
- ➔ Develop an arts trail for the Shire and linking into other local council areas.
- ➔ Audit and map the Shire's creative industries to understand where and what creative industries are located and represented in the Shire to understand future needs and priorities for the sector.
- ➔ Develop a promotion strategy for creative activity across the Shire for residents and visitors.



Photo credits top to bottom: Busker at Lennox Head community markets (*Image* Ballina Shire Council); People of the Reeds, Cabbage Tree Island (*Image* Frangipani Creative with permission from Arts Northern Rivers); Ballina Arts and Crafts Centre Inc. opening of the Grace Cruice Memorial Exhibition, 2013, Northern Rivers Community Gallery, (*Image* Ballina Arts and Crafts Centre Inc).

CULTURAL SPACES

Better utilise our existing cultural infrastructure, as well as respond to changing needs, to hold and encourage cultural activity

Ballina is home to the Northern Rivers Community Gallery, which has a regional artists' base, diverse arts programs, and a growing audience. Ballina, Alstonville and Lennox Head communities are serviced by purpose built community facilities that host varied cultural activity. These centres also have highly valued public libraries that provide cultural activity centring on books, audio and digital resources that meet our personal interest and education needs. Our libraries also offer other services, including toy libraries and hold local history resources.

Our Shire also contains 13 public halls that currently service localised cultural activity. These spaces, which have historically serviced our communities well, provide opportunities to enhance, or re-invigorate, cultural activity at a local community level. Churches, and church organisations, of various denominations are part of the Shire's historic spiritual culture, or traditions. Churches and other spirituality based organisations continue to generate, and support cultural activity in the Shire. Cultural activity and events are also held at the Ballina Amphitheatre and in other outdoor public spaces.

We also see cultural spaces as encompassing urban environments, with cultural activity such as cinema, café and food culture concentrated in our towns and villages and highly valued by our community. Active and passive recreation is well serviced by Council managed sporting fields and an array of other parks, open spaces and reserves, including skate parks.

Having sufficient and affordable spaces in which to hold cultural activity was strongly expressed by our community as an important cultural activity need across the Shire.

Cultural activity we will build on...

The historic Newrybar and Tintenbar Halls are run by local committees that co-ordinate and run cultural activities such as dinner and film nights. Importantly, they also cater to functions to fund raise for the management of these important cultural spaces.

In the Kentwell Community Centre, Ballina and the Lennox Head Cultural and Community Centre, Council co-ordinates a varied program of cultural activity. The Richmond Room in Ballina is also well patronised by community groups who run varied cultural activities.

In partnership with Essential Energy, Council co-ordinated The Transform Community Art Project. An anti-graffiti project it involved artists working with mentors to design and install works on local transformer boxes. Artists included representatives from INTRA Youth Services, Brain Injury Support Services Inc., Life Without Barriers, Southern Cross K-12 School and Lennox Art Board.

Photo credits to the right, starting from the top line, view left to right: Ballina Library (*Image Terry Ferguson*); Ballina Players Theatre, Swift Street, Ballina (*Image Ballina Players*); Skullcandy Surf Carnival, Lennox Head foreshore (*Image Ballina Shire Council*); Fripp Oval, Ballina (*Image Ballina Shire Council*); Transform Community Art project, Lennox Head transformer box (*Image Ballina Shire Council*); Lennox Head outdoor community market (*Image Terry Ferguson*); Alstonville Plateau Historical Society meet in the Alstonville RSL Sub-branch historic hall, Alstonville, (*Image Alstonville Plateau Historical Society*); Window shades on the Woolworths building River Street Ballina depicting artwork by Digby Moran (*Image Terry Ferguson*); Lennox Head Skate Park (*Image Ballina Shire Council*).



CULTURAL SPACES continued

Opportunities

Manage Council's community and sports facilities to meet the varied cultural activity needs of the Shire.

Foster the use of our community facilities and historic halls to enhance or re-invigorate cultural activity at a local community level across all ages and cultures.

Develop our parks and foreshore areas to be family friendly and flexible spaces for varied cultural activity and events.

Support outdoor community events that are family friendly.

Develop the Northern Rivers Community Gallery as a hub for diverse cultural activity that complements exhibitions – including live music and other performance, education and professional development programs and family based cultural activity.

Enable creative community partnerships to diversify existing cultural spaces.

Support the use of vacant shops in central localities for pop-up galleries.

Support public art on suitable public infrastructure.

Respond to changing cultural activity needs through adapting existing infrastructure, or building new infrastructure that has adaptable spaces.

How Council fosters this objective...

Groups from across the Shire develop and hold community events across all spheres of cultural activity – including the visual and performing arts, Aboriginal culture, heritage, environment and sport.

Council funds and manages the Alstonville Leisure and Entertainment Centre, Kentwell Community Centre, Richmond Room, Ballina Surf Life Saving Club and the Lennox Head Cultural and Community Centre; along with a number of the Shire's community halls – including Wardell and District War Memorial Hall and Tintenbar Hall.

Council has an Event Support Program and an Events and Grants Support Officer to assist in funding and organising community events in the Shire. Other assistance provided to community events includes grounds preparations and promotion.

Council funds and supports the Shire's public libraries.

Potential Projects

- ➔ Support or collaborate with local community hall committees to hold music, other performances or Pop Up and family activities and events in our local community halls.
- ➔ Audit Council's outdoor areas utilised by families to assist planning for the enhancement of these places.
- ➔ Record the oral histories of our community halls to promote their ongoing use and relevance.
- ➔ Work with artists and arts based community groups, to develop 'information kits' to assist in navigating Council's administration requirements for holding local cultural activity or community events.
- ➔ Build on existing infrastructure to establish a network of adaptable venues to enable community gatherings and events.
- ➔ Integrate creative and cultural initiatives and needs into public facilities.
- ➔ Collaborate with our libraries to hold cultural activity.



Photo credits top to bottom: Wardell and District War Memorial Hall (*Image* Terry Ferguson); Northern Rivers Community Gallery (*Image* Ballina Shire Council); Ballina Amphitheatre (*Image* Terry Ferguson).

FAMILY FUN

Shape our cultural image and infrastructure to reflect a family friendly place for all of us to live and others to visit

Developing our cultural image and infrastructure to be family friendly caters to the cultural activity needs of the whole of the Shire community. While the Ballina Shire is generally known as an ageing community, children and young people are also important age and social groupings within our community who engage with cultural activity in the Shire.

Approximately 18% of the Shire's population is 65 years and over, and just over 35% of households in the Ballina Shire include children. Age groupings in between generally comprise those raising children. Together, these groupings make up our Shire families. Our Aboriginal population also comprise culturally distinct family groupings who desire to see their identity and culture reflected in our community.

Our Shire is generally considered family friendly, given its key attributes – encompassing coastal and outdoor environments and lifestyle. The Shire's growing network of open spaces, walkways and cycle ways, which predominantly traverse flat environments, add to its family appeal.

Our family friendly image culturally distinguishes us from other local government areas. Emphasised as a point of difference it will attract and retain visitors to our community. Just over 30% of the Shire's domestic visitors to the Ballina Shire travel with children, experiencing our outdoor environment is one of the Shire's most popular attractions.

Cultural activity we will build on...

A number of outdoor environments in the Shire are managed to be safe and dedicated spaces for cultural activity across age and other social groupings. These include the summertime patrol of various beaches, pools and established skate parks at Lennox Head and Ballina.

Artist-run school holiday workshops at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery have included painting, sculpture, storytelling and print-making.

Over 45 of Council's parks have play equipment installed for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Promotion of the Shire to visitors through the Ballina Coast and Hinterland Visitor Guide.

Photo credit right: Family fun at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery artist run holiday workshops (*Image Ballina Shire Council*).



FAMILY FUN continued

Opportunities

Work with children, young people, parents and grandparents to plan for cultural activity and infrastructure that is inclusive of all families and family members – including age, gender, disability and cultural groupings.

Encourage community events that are family friendly and integrate creative family activities into existing community events.

Promote our environment and cultural activity to residents and visitors in age and culturally appropriate ways and to reflect the whole Shire community.

Support a signature festival in the Shire centring on families.

How Council fosters this objective...

Hold artist-run workshops for children during school holidays at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.

Promote young artists through the Northern Rivers Community Gallery's annual Youth Week exhibition and through other emerging artist exhibitions.

The Shire's Visitor Information Centre promotes a holiday program of local activity including family-centred activities.

'What's On' provides a directory of the community run activities and groups that operate out of Council's four community facilities across the Shire for families, youth, seniors and other community groups.

Various community groups work with schools to hold cultural activity for children.

Potential Projects

- Make available online the facilities available at the Shire's parks and open spaces that cater to families.
- Integrate public art that is child focused and interactive into parks and public spaces used by families.
- Work with relevant stakeholders to establish a bird hide that is child friendly to promote our bird species and their conservation.
- Review and implement Council's adopted Playground Equipment Program.
- Support community groups to hold cultural activity that is inclusive of families.
- Support young people to develop and hold cultural and creative activity.
- Explore the benefits of initiating a dedicated Children's Festival that integrates creative activity with the Shire's sense of place values .
- Provide for large scale children's play space.



Photo credits top to bottom: Family at the Spit, Ballina; Rivafest, Fawcett Park, Ballina; Enjoying Ballina's great outdoors, East Ballina (Images Ballina Shire Council).

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APPENDIX ONE summary of community consultation

The community engagement phase of the Cultural Plan commenced at the end of July 2013 with the BSC Youth Council Focus Group and ended Friday 30 August with the close of the Online Survey. Other engagement occurring in between these two activities included the circulation of the Cultural Plan Issues Paper; Online Survey (also distributed in hard copy to select locations noted below); and focus groups with creative and cultural industries stakeholders – both general and a dedicated Aboriginal focus group.

Cultural Plan Issues Paper

The Cultural Plan Issues Paper was compiled to help the Shire community participate in the Cultural Plan process. It explained what a cultural plan is, 'cultural activity' includes, why a Cultural Plan is important and why Ballina Shire Council is preparing a Cultural Plan?

It also included a snapshot of facts and figures about the Ballina Shire area which 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 fact and figures included demographic information about the Shire community and highlighted some of our important cultural assets.

The Cultural Plan Issues Paper was made available online and at various distribution points outlined below where hard copies of the Cultural Plan Survey and Cultural Postcard was left.

BSC Youth Council focus group

In association with Council's Social Planning Co-ordinator, a focus group was held with Council's Youth Council on Tuesday 30 August, 2013.

The focus of the discussion considered cultural activity in the Shire in the context of its strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Participants were also asked to rank in importance any cultural activity identified as an opportunity/desired improvement.

Prior to the focus group, Youth Council members were sent a copy of the BSC Cultural Plan Issues Paper to stimulate thinking about cultural activity in the Shire and cultural planning matters.

Responses from the Youth Council focus group were considered along with other responses identified during the Shire Wide Youth Forum held by Council in December 2012, where a similar SWOT framework was posed to a much larger group of young people about issues facing them throughout the Shire.

Cultural Postcard

The idea behind the cultural postcard as a community engagement tool was twofold. Firstly, it served to promote the Cultural Plan process, particularly the community engagement phase. It also 'advertised' the Online Survey and the Cultural Plan Issues Paper, given these sought to engage the community more broadly. The postcard was two-sided. The 'front' incorporated an image and the simple question 'Does Culture Matter?' to generate interest and a response to the question and the online survey.

The reverse-side of the postcard provided details of how to access the online survey and the Cultural Plan Issues Paper, as well as Council's contact details. It also asked two key questions concerning the Shire's cultural strengths and areas of cultural activity that could be improved most. These questions were a snapshot of the larger survey and were completed by respondents who did not have time to undertake the (longer) online survey.

The postcard was left at 20 distribution points throughout the Shire along with a 'postbox' to enable respondents to immediately complete and return the postcard. Postcards were left at the following points for the duration of the online survey.

- Ballina Shire Council Customer Service Centre.
- Ballina Visitor Information Centre
- Northern Rivers Community Gallery*
- Kentwell Community Centre, Ballina*
- Alstonville Leisure and Entertainment Centre Foyer
- Lennox Head Cultural and Community Centre
- Lennox Head Library* Alstonville Library* Ballina Library*
- Crawford House Alstonville*
- Wardell Post Office*
- Ballina Players Theatre*
- Ballina Naval Museum
- Bunjum Aboriginal Co-operative
- Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Lennox Art Lab
- The Point Café, Lennox Head
- Harvest Café, Newrybar
- Quattro, Alstonville
- A total of 120 postcards were completed.

* indicates that a hard copy of the 'online' survey was also left at these points/locations

Online Survey

The Online Survey sought to reach the general Shire community. As noted above, it was 'advertised' at twenty distribution points/places in the Shire via the Cultural Postcard; as well as through posters at these points/localities. In addition, the survey was promoted through e-blast, Council's website and throughout various local media.

The survey asked a range of questions about cultural activity in the Shire including respondents' consumption of cultural activity and their views on its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities/area(s) of desired improvement. Other demographic questions concerning respondents were also asked including age, gender and residence (see Appendix Three).

A total of 264 surveys were completed; 189 online and 75 hard copies.

Shire-based creative and cultural industries representatives' focus group

A focus group was held with Shire based creative and cultural industries representatives at the Lennox Head Cultural and Community Centre on Tuesday 20 August, 2013. Creative and cultural industries representatives were targeted for a focus group given their role in delivering/fostering cultural activity across the Shire. Representatives were selected by invitation and from Arts Northern Rivers' creative and cultural industries database. Approximately 40 invitations were distributed, with 14 respondents attending the meeting.

The focus group was facilitated by Arts Northern Rivers' CEO Peter Wood. In keeping with the youth Focus Group, and key survey questions, the focus group included a SWOT analysis of cultural activity in the Shire. A 'Soapbox' segment was also held at the beginning of the focus group inviting attendees to raise any issues on the topic of cultural activity/planning in the Ballina Shire.

Aboriginal community representatives focus group

A third focus group was held with Aboriginal community representatives associated the cultural or creative industries in the Shire. This group was facilitated by Robert Appo, who has extensive experience in working with Aboriginal communities in the creative industries in the Northern Rivers. Invitations were sent to select community representatives who work in the creative or cultural industries sector. Seven (7) community members attended the focus group. Others unable to attend were contacted by telephone following the focus group. It also included a SWOT analysis of cultural activity in the Shire.

APPENDIX TWO table indicating resource implication for potential projects

Potential Projects are coded in accordance with the following:

R – indicates a cultural activity or project is currently resourced by Council that meets this project idea

ER – indicates the activity/project may be achieved through existing resources allocated by Council

AR – indicates that the project requires additional resources to be achieved by either Council or the community

NOTE: Some potential projects have been given more than one of these codes, for instance indicating that the activity is currently resourced (R) as well as requires additional resources (AR). This is to show that this type of cultural activity, or project, may be undertaken more than once and carried out in different ways over time. For example coding may show that while a single place-making project may be currently resourced, for another to take place it will require additional resources beyond those already allocated.

CULTURAL ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE & POTENTIAL PROJECT	RESOURCE CODE
SENSE OF PLACE	
Establish character statements for our Shire settlements	ER
Interpret our places through public art and within public spaces to enhance their aesthetic, use and vibrancy	R, ER & AR
Assist our community groups to source grant funding to hold cultural activity and community events that promote our heritage, stories and unique features	ER
Hold grant writing workshops focusing on funding to develop and hold cultural activity or sense of place projects	ER
With our historical societies and museums, promote best practice conservation, as well as the use of our community historical collections for everybody	ER & AR
Explore a themed program connecting all our museums and historical societies in the Shire and promote this through joint advertising at visitor centres and online	AR
Work with Arts Northern Rivers to develop and conduct a survey of our Shire's museums and history groups to understand the needs and priorities for the sector	AR
Establish an ongoing oral history recording program for our Shire area	AR
Map the Shire's cultural assets to promote cultural activity that fosters sense of place within our community and to visitors	AR
Shire-based festivals that embrace the objectives of this plan	AR

CULTURAL ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE & POTENTIAL PROJECT	RESOURCE CODE
ABORIGINAL CULTURE	
Collaborate with our Shire business community to promote NAIDOC Week and the Shire's Aboriginal culture	ER
Increase the involvement of our Shire's schools in NAIDOC Week celebrations	ER
Share Aboriginal culture and stories through public art projects in prominent locations	AR
Hold local Aboriginal music and dance performances	ER & AR
Collaborate with Elders and theatre groups to tell Aboriginal stories	AR
Promote opportunities and partnerships to establish a Cultural Centre or Keeping Place	ER & AR
Work with Aboriginal community representatives to increase dual place naming throughout the Shire	ER
Work with the Northern Rivers Community Gallery to develop an Aboriginal Art Prize	ER & AR
Collaborate with Aboriginal community members to care for and interpret the natural and cultural landscape	ER & AR

CULTURAL ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE & POTENTIAL PROJECT	RESOURCE CODE
GREAT OUTDOORS	
Establish heritage and nature based trails to explore and experience the environmental values of our Shire	AR
Develop interpretive signage that is child friendly and interactive	AR
Explore funding opportunities for the maintenance and rehabilitation of our environment	R & ER
Undertake a community based environmental education program focussed on the environmental and cultural values of the Richmond River	AR
Promote the care and stories of our natural environment through creative activity, local history collections and at community events	R & AR
Establish and promote an award for Environmental Citizen of the Year	ER
Map our natural vegetation and its values	AR
Plant appropriate endemic street trees to enhance our sense of place	ER & AR
Publicise Council's water quality data results	ER

CULTURAL ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE & POTENTIAL PROJECT	RESOURCE CODE
ART SMART	
Collaborate with local business to support or sponsor creative activity in the Shire	ER & AR
Promote opportunities for collaboration across the arts, environment and community education needs	ER & AR
Work with Arts Northern Rivers to establish a Northern Rivers Creative Pop Up project in Ballina to showcase a selection of creative industries in the Shire	ER & AR
Explore flexible shared workspaces for artists and arts learning	AR
Explore local histories and issues through art exhibitions and programs	R & AR
Develop an arts trail for the Shire and linking into other local council areas	AR
Audit and map the Shire's creative industries to understand where and what creative industries are located and represented in the Shire to understand future needs and priorities for the sector	AR
Develop a promotion strategy for creative activity across the Shire for residents and visitors	AR

CULTURAL ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE & POTENTIAL PROJECT	RESOURCE CODE
CULTURAL SPACE	
Support or collaborate with local community hall committees to hold music, other performances or Pop Up and family activities and events in our local community halls	AR
Audit Council's outdoor areas utilised by families to assist planning for the enhancement of these places	AR
Record the oral histories of our community halls to promote their ongoing use and relevance	AR
Work with artists and arts based community groups, to develop 'information kits' to assist in navigating Council's administration requirements for holding local cultural activity or community events	ER & AR
Build on existing infrastructure to establish a network of adaptable venues to enable community gatherings and events	AR
Integrate creative and cultural initiatives and needs into public facilities	R, ER & AR
Collaborate with our libraries to hold cultural activity	AR

CULTURAL ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE & POTENTIAL PROJECT	RESOURCE CODE
FAMILY FUN	
Make available online the facilities available at the Shire's parks and open spaces that cater to families	ER
Integrate public art that is child focused and interactive into parks and public spaces used by families	AR
Work with relevant stakeholders to establish a bird hide that is child friendly to promote our bird species and their conservation	AR
Review and implement Council's adopted Playground Equipment Program	AR
Support community groups to hold cultural activity that is inclusive of families	ER & AR
Support young people to develop and hold cultural and creative activity	ER & AR
Explore the benefits of initiating a dedicated Children's Festival that integrates creative activity with the Shire's sense of place values	AR
Provide for large scale children's play space	AR

APPENDIX THREE postcard and online survey data summary

POSTCARD SURVEY

The postcard was a 'snapshot' survey, considered an alternative option to completing the (longer) online survey. 120 postcard surveys were completed. The majority of these were collected from the Northern Rivers Community Gallery (38%), Lennox Head (32 %) and Crawford House (9%).

The postcard asked two questions:

What are the Shire's cultural strengths? and

What areas of cultural activity could be improved most?

Answers could be provided by tick box option (12 options) or by self-directed responses.

The Shire's cultural strengths:

The top five ranking cultural strengths and as a percentage of all responses received were:

- environment and open space 17%
- walkways and cycle ways 13%
- local history/heritage 11%
- arts and crafts 10%
- Aboriginal culture/heritage 9%
- friendliness of people 9%.

Cultural activity that could be most improved:

- environment and open space 33%
- cycleways and walkways 32%
- Aboriginal culture combined 29%
- arts and crafts 28%
- community events 23%.

ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey asked 20 questions about cultural activity in the Ballina Shire area. 266 responses were received – 189 online and 77 as hard copies. The following is a summary of responses to key aspects of the online survey.

Who did the online survey?

- 69% female & 31% male.
- The greatest number of responses were in the 35 to 75 age groupings.
- 5% of responses were from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Where in the Shire do respondents to the survey live?

- 32% Ballina (including Ballina Island, East, West and South Ballina areas)
- 34% Lennox Head area
- 13% Alstonville, Wollongbar, Pearces Creek and Fernleigh areas
- 3% Wardell, Bagotville and Meerschaum Vale areas
- 7% Tintenbar and Newrybar areas.

How often do community members participate in cultural activity?

- daily 20%
- weekly or fortnightly 63%
- monthly 9%
- every two months 2%
- every six months 2%
- annually <1%.

Who do you usually participate in cultural activity with in the Shire?

- myself 21%
- spouse/partner 23%
- children 12%
- other family/relatives 10%
- friends 23%
- visitors 11%.

Which areas of cultural activity do you participate in most?

Highest ranking responses included the following:

- natural environment 7%
- gallery/museums 8%
- markets 8%
- library 8%
- cinema 8%
- café culture 8%
- theatre 6%
- community events 6%.

Which areas of cultural activity could be most improved?

Responses were self-directed and included the following groupings.

- environment and open space
- cycleways and walkways;
- Aboriginal culture
- arts activities
- community events (varying from festivals to local community level events)
- community facilities
- historic character/history/sense of place /knowing about our community.

Which areas of cultural activity could be most improved? (cont')

- local community activity
- greater variety of food
- cafes
- film
- live music
- youth and family activities.

Reasons for participating in cultural activity?

Highest ranking responses included the following:

- fun 12%
- brings the community together 12%
- intellectually and emotionally stimulating 10%
- creative need 9%
- health benefits 9%
- to feel part of the community 9%
- education benefits 7%
- to meet people 7%.

Satisfaction levels with cultural activity in the Shire:

- 57% indicated they are very satisfied to satisfied with the level of cultural activity available in the Shire
- 30% indicated they were unsatisfied to extremely unsatisfied.

Of those who indicated why they were unsatisfied the following reasons were indicated:

- 8% I am not interested in what is available
- 13% I am/get bored with what is available
- 54% local cultural activity is lacking
- 25% other reasons.

Participating in cultural activity outside of the Ballina Shire:

The majority of community members indicated they also participate in cultural activity outside of the Shire. The following responses were given:

- 29% cultural activity I am interested in is not available in the Shire
- 47% diversity of cultural experience
- 9% to participate in or attend competitions
- 6% other.

How community members participate in cultural activity in the Shire:

Respondents indicated that they participate almost equally in cultural activity as both participants and audience members (40 & 37% respectively) and 21% of respondents participate as volunteers in cultural activity.

How community members find out about cultural activity in the Shire:

Highest ranking repos included:

- word of mouth 24%
- newspaper 23%
- radio 11%
- internet/social media 14%
- posters/flyers 15%
- email subscriptions 11%.

Accessibility to cultural activity in the Shire:

60% respondents indicated they did not face issues preventing access to cultural activity

17% respondents indicated they did face access issues with most nominating this was cost related.



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