

Byron Studios licence Alstonville Cultural Centre for filming purposes

Ballina Shire Council has resolved to negotiate a licence agreement with Byron Studios to occupy the Alstonville Cultural Centre for filming purposes. The one-plus-one-year licence was endorsed by Council at the 24 September Ordinary meeting.

Part of the resolution is for Council to work closely with Byron Studios to ensure large-scale community events such as the Alstonville Agricultural Show and the Quota Craft and Garden Fair can continue at the Centre.

Council staff will also work with regular hirers to find alternative facilities to support their needs during the term of the licence.

Mayor David Wright, who voted in support of the proposal, which still requires Byron Studios to agree to the terms, outlined how this proposal could help support film and television production within the Ballina Shire. "It's a start up industry for our region and by working with proponents such as Byron Studios, a sustainable film and television industry could flourish in the Northern Rivers."

"Support for the film industry in Ballina Shire can have social benefits through educational opportunities, and also provide significant economic benefits by generating employment, especially for our youth, and by providing opportunities for local businesses," said Cr Wright.

"Byron Studios has expressed a strong interest in establishing a sound stage and studio complex in the Southern Cross Industrial Estate in Ballina. The occupation of this site is still a couple of years away, so the Alstonville Cultural Centre is an ideal, interim, venue for Byron Studios as a short to medium term solution for the film industry to operate from within our shire."

Mr Mark Holden, founder and managing director of Byron Studios, explained that over the past few months, circumstances have changed in the Australian film industry. Byron Studios have been pursuing opportunities created by the Covid-19 pandemic which has forced movie producers to seek low-risk locations such as Australia.

Byron Studios is close to securing a major production but need to secure a suitable venue by 1 November 2020 and finding such a venue at short notice has proven difficult.

"We approached Ballina Shire Council and the Alstonville Cultural Centre was identified as a potential option. Byron Studios want to work with and in the Alstonville community to support and engage locals and businesses to provide services that each production needs."

"That means using local trades, retail, caterers, accommodation, and trades services such as electricians. The services and products that the film industry need to function is extensive and we will be looking to our local area first when sourcing services, products and even some talent," said Mr Holden.

"With the increasing Australian and international demand and consumption of film and TV content, this is a unique opportunity to be part of an exciting new and fast growing business and create social and economic benefits by providing new jobs and opportunities, especially for young people," added Mr Holden.

Once the production is secured, a community information evening is planned for late October. To find out more, visit Byron Studios website [**byronstudios.co**](http://byronstudios.co).

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