



TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

# A CULTURAL PLAN FOR TOWNSVILLE



Bob Preston. "In the Lagoon of Mythic Origins". 1999  
Painted design for a mosaic; Strand Redevelopment Project

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A separate report on Victoria Bridge was completed as part of the initial Cultural Plan. That Report has been already used by the Council in the planning for the redevelopment of the Central Business District and the improvement of access across Ross Creek.

Information on the project brief; reference materials; consultancy program and planning documents is available from the Council.

DOCUMENT EDITOR  
Frank Hornby  
Director  
Community and Cultural Services Dept  
Townsville City Council  
PO Box 1268, Townsville. 4810  
Phone: 07 4727 9688

CONSULTANTS TO THE PROJECT  
Positive Solutions  
PO Box 765, New Farm. 4005

15 May 2001

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## **FORWARD**

Townsville City Council's vision statement, in the year 2000, sought to highlight future commitments for the development of the City, built on the successful partnerships forged over many decades with the people of Townsville, our leaders in business and community organisations and the other spheres of Government.

It was stated then as it is now that Townsville's economic and cohesive future is closely tied to our reputation as an attractive and culturally alive City in which to live and work.

While culture is not an easy word to define, the Council recognises that the culture of Townsville is, in effect, a critical reflection and a celebration of what our community is, where it has come from and where it is going. Our culture is its identity and memory. It is also our future. For while our City has a reputation for supporting individual creative activity, and is host to numerous arts and cultural events and festivals, we need to move forward.

With this in mind the Council initiated a consultation process in 2000 with local professional and community-based cultural organisations and the wider community to seek out future directions for cultural facilities and projects.

A Cultural Plan for Townsville is the outcome of this work and while it represent a synopsis of our fascinating cultural history, the document also opens up opportunities for more intense dialogue with other spheres of Government, artists and community organisations.

Resources and standards of excellence are pivotal to this dialogue, as are the clarity of objectives and resolutions, developed in a spirit of co-operation.

The Council is appreciative of the involvement of the many participants in the consultation process, so ably facilitated by David Fischel and Cathy Hunt and the subsequent work of the staff of Council's Community and Cultural Services Department to complete the writing of this document.

The Cultural Plan has identified the challenges that lay ahead and the strategies to achieve successful outcomes for our City. I seek your endorsement and support for its implementation.



Councillor David Mather  
Chairperson Community and Cultural Development Committee  
Townsville City Council

## **INTRODUCTION**

Positive Solutions was engaged by Townsville City Council to prepare a draft Cultural Planning Document for the City of Townsville, working with Council's Community and Cultural Services Department. The objectives of the project were:

- To produce a Cultural Planning Document that will provide a clear and positive direction for the development of cultural facilities and activities in Townsville.
- To pursue the planning for a flexible performing arts space (200-250 person capacity) within the inner city area.
- To have specific regard for the redevelopment of the Central Business District and cultural infrastructure of the City.
- To consult with the professional and community based cultural and arts organisations, and the broader community to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of cultural activity and resources in Townsville.

The Consultants were also requested to produce a detailed business plan for the redevelopment of Victoria Bridge into a community arts centre, including advice on design, funding, operation and management of the proposal. As a result of extensive community consultation it became evident that the viability of the Bridge as a cultural precinct for the performing and visual arts was doubtful because of the excessive redevelopment cost and limited funding. In addition there was also a strong preference throughout the community for the Bridge to become a walkway with an open outlook, linking the cultural precincts of the CBD and Palmer Street.

I wish to thank the principals of Positive Solutions, David Fischel and Cathy Hunt, for working with the Council and the community in a professional manner and in providing us with a forward thinking draft report. To my colleagues in the Community and Cultural Services Department of the Council and to the arts community of Townsville, our appreciation for their many hours of meetings and for giving strong direction for the future of arts and cultural development in our region.

**"A Cultural Plan for Townsville"** is based on the work of Positive Solutions and our subsequent editing within Council's Community & Cultural Services Department. The document will enable the Council and the Townsville community to engage with the Queensland State Government, the Commonwealth Government, business and appropriate organisations, on policy and funding arrangements for arts and cultural development. An earlier draft was distributed to community cultural organisations in Townsville for comment and support.

May I thank the Townsville City Council, and in particular, the Mayor, Councillor Tony Mooney, Councillor David Mather and the Councillors who serve on Council's Community and Cultural Development Committee for providing the advice on policy direction and the funds to prepare the Report for the use of the wider community.

Frank Hornby  
Director, Community & Cultural Services Department

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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRIEF

### Definitions

The word culture is possibly one of the most ambiguous in the English language. There are two main uses for the word today:

**Culture** as the product of intellectual and creative activity – this is a long list which cannot be exclusive, incorporating all art forms and which changes as new technologies create new mediums for creative expression – recording, broadcasting and more recently the internet and multi-media applications.

**Culture** as a broader anthropological meaning referring to a whole way of life as in Aboriginal culture, or youth culture, or indeed the culture of Townsville. This definition means that culture may not necessarily have specific geographic boundaries.

Townsville has used a number of different definitions in a range of publications that have dealt with the subject over the last few years. Many deal with culture in its broadest sense in relation to lifestyle and values.

*The cumulative expression of community identity through the natural and built environment; heritage and shared languages; through the arts and crafts; recreation and leisure activities and the many other ways by which creative identity is expressed, interpreted and acknowledge*

One definition used by Townsville and which is very appropriate, incorporates both meanings of the word, describing one in relation to the other.

*Culture defines who we are, and it encompasses our entire way of life, our ethics, our institutions, our manners and our routines. The most highly developed and imaginative aspects of our culture are the arts which help to shape our identity as a community and contribute to enhancing our way of life.*

The Council's Community and Cultural Services Department in its relationship with the community and Governments deals with all aspects of cultural expression and identity including the arts. Much of the consultation with the community focused on the issue of arts and creativity and their current position in the cultural expression of the community and the City of Townsville.

***It is recognised that the issues raised and the needs identified through the research need to be integrated with other policy developments including land use planning, heritage, sport, recreation, and the importance of place and cultural identity in social, environmental and other planning issues.***

## **Nature of this Document**

“A Cultural Plan for Townsville” provides a framework for the City’s role in the development of the **arts and the creative aspects of cultural expression**, through identifying:

- a vision
- aims
- key policy areas
- suggested strategic ways forward for the next few years.

However, in pursuing an integrated approach to the development of these activities (through partnership working both within Council and with external stakeholders), it presents a framework for ongoing planning that can incorporate all aspects of the City’s cultural life.

The document also identifies where further research and strategic planning may need to be undertaken by the Council and the community into different aspects of lifestyle and community activity. It identifies certain implications for the City of Townsville in pursuing each policy area, and proposes possible strategies for the achievement of the aims. Finally the document concludes with an action plan including ongoing consultation to discuss policies, aims and strategies to key stakeholders.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Consultation**

At the start of the cultural planning process, the Aboriginal community sought the assistance of Council’s Community and Cultural Services Department to prepare a detailed submission to the Commonwealth Government for the establishment of an Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Centre. As the process required extensive consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City and the Elders Advisory Committee, it was agreed that it would be inappropriate to consult the community twice on similar issues during the same period of time. The outcome of our collective work was endorsed by the Aboriginal and Torres St Islander communities and then negotiated through ATSIC and the Elders group. Council has further assisted the community to locate land for the Cultural Centre and the associated negotiations with the respective State Government Departments.

The submissions were successful and planning is now well underway for the establishment of an innovative Cultural Park, facilities and programs under local Aboriginal and Torres St Islander management.

Discussions with Council’s Aboriginal and Torres St. Islander Elders Advisory Committee also identified the need for improved information and facilities within Council’s Library Services. One outcome is a designated area in the Aitkenvale Library for Indigenous studies and resources, which includes historical documents from the Tindale collection of family records.

Ongoing cultural planning for services and facilities is underway through specific local organisations. Council's Aboriginal & Torres St Islander Cultural Officers provide links for the local communities and the region’s Arts and Cultural organisations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to meet the demands of the brief, the following steps were taken by the consultants:

- interviews were held with representatives from the cultural and business sectors, with officers and elected members of City Council, and with officers of Arts Queensland
- group discussions were held with representatives of the performing arts and visual arts/heritage sectors, to consider strengths and weaknesses of these sectors in Townsville
- group discussions were held focusing on the future of Victoria Bridge and likely usage for arts and cultural facilities
- a group discussion was held with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders Advisory Committee
- a postal survey of cultural groups in Townsville was undertaken to ascertain activity levels, membership, audience numbers and geographical spread
- a survey of c.400 local residents, **interested in cultural aspects** of the City, was undertaken to identify cultural consumption patterns and views on future cultural development in Townsville
- two policy development workshops were held with officers from the Community and Cultural Services Department
- following the workshop and response to the option papers, the final report of the Consultants was received by Council and reviewed by Council's Community and Cultural Services Department and used as a basis for significant sections of the "Cultural Plan for Townsville".

The section on the cultural history of Townsville was adapted from the archives of the Townsville local history Museum, the Townsville Library and Council documents. Mr John Mathew has been helpful in locating resource material, especially back copies of the Townsville Daily Bulletin. Ross Searle, a former Manager of the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, provided a very definitive work "Artist in the Tropics - 200 years of Art in North Queensland" - R. Searle. Produced by Rainforest Publishing 1991.

Editorial responsibility for the document rests with the Director of Council's Community and Cultural Services Department.

A Cultural Plan for Townsville was approved by the Townsville City Council on 15 May 2001.

## **PART TWO                    CULTURAL CONTEXT AND KEY FINDINGS**

This section of the report provides an Executive Summary from the information contained in the appendices, focusing on areas that have implications for future policy development. It has been compiled from within Council.

### **Cultural Background of the Region**

The area now known as Townsville is reported to have been occupied by Aboriginal people for many thousands of years. It is understood that the early people were divided into small, named local groups, tied through religious beliefs and rituals to specific areas of land identified by a prominent land form, such as Cape Cleveland, Mt Elliot or Magnetic Island. Each small group systematically harvested its economic resources as a band, in family units or in co-operation with other neighbouring groups, depending on the season and the availability of particular food sources. Large gatherings were occasions for religious rituals. For Aboriginal people the physical form, language, law and spirit of their country is explained through the activities of their ancestral beings.

European history of Townsville dates back to Captain Cook's 1770 voyage, when Magnetic Island and nearby areas of coastline were recorded and named. The first extensive European exploration of the Townsville area was undertaken in 1860 by George Dalrymple. From this exploration, Port Denison (Bowen) and the surrounding areas were settled. The City of Townsville was then founded in 1864 as a port to serve squatters in the hinterland. A key to the region's prosperity has been its continued role as a transport hub. The discovery of gold was a major catalyst for economic development in the region. Between 1867 and 1872 five major gold fields as well as silver, copper and other base metals were opened in the wider region. This development provided a new opportunity for the pastoral industry. During the 1870's and the 1880's, sugar growing was established to the north and south of Townsville thus providing for an expanded Port that has continued to be a major focal point for the Region's economic development.

Townsville played an important part in the 1940's as a base for the war in the Pacific. During this time, the City accommodated over 100,000 allied forces. The airfield and military barracks have continued to play a significant part in the City's life and its economy.

In addition to the City Council's own administration, both Commonwealth and State Government have important administrative bases in Townsville, serving Northern and Western Queensland. Townsville is now one of the principle urban centres in Australia.

As our cultural history shows, Townsville is a major regional centre for all forms of artistic expression and is increasing its profile in the performing arts, dance, music and the visual arts. The impact of James Cook University on the development of arts practice and the enduring commitment of the Townsville City Council in progressing the Arts cannot be underestimated.

Arts and Cultural expression have always been an integral part of the life of the Townsville community.



***“From eternity the arts have captured the soul of humanity and inspired forms of expression that span millenniums.”***

## **The Visual Arts**

The Northern Tropics of Australia has its special galleries of indigenous art that grace our natural environment. They are the rock engravings that are part of the hidden suburban and rural landscape of the Townsville Region and will one day be universally appreciated as providing another connecting link between our present and the past.

For the early British navigators, especially Cook and Flinders, the strange and exotic flora of the northern coastline was the inspiration for European engravings that introduced the British public to the Australian environment.

Local plants and animals as well as drawings of the coastal topography certainly featured in the work of Joseph Banks and his two artists, Buchan and Parkinson, as the Endeavour sailed our Northern coastline.

Ross Searle, former Manager of the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in Townsville and author of “Artists in the Tropics” notes that:

“different people saw this tropical region in different ways. Scientists, botanists and topographers had a more objective and perhaps keener perspective than that of the explorers and early pastoralists. The idea of opening up new territories and subjugating the land was itself a romantic notion reflecting the desire of man to be in control of the environment”.

The Perc Tucker Regional Gallery took up this theme in 1998 with the exhibition of Kennedy’s ill-fated expedition (1849) through the North to the Cape York Peninsula. The Exhibition used drawings by Huxley, a member of Kennedy’s team to depict the visual drama of adventure and the hostility of the environment. This is a theme taken up by subsequent artists journeying through the Tropics.

The first sketch of European life in the Townsville Region that has survived time is probably the “Homestead at Woodstock” (Reid c1865)

From the 1870’s naturalists and anthropologists began to be attracted to the North. One of the more fascinating artists was Marian Ellis Rowan, who came many times to North Queensland to paint her tropical flowers and fauna. Her fascinating life and work inspired the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery to curate an exhibition of Rowan’s work in 1993, much of which had gathered dust in Brisbane based Galleries.

Contemporaries of Rowan to visit Townsville during this period were Julian Ashton, Tom Roberts and Edward Bevan.

Ashton’s work “Castle Hill, Townsville” c1885, and Bevan’s “Castle Hill”, 1886 are part of the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery collection.

By the 1890’s artists had rejected the picturesque natural environment as subject matter and concentrated on pastoral scenes and the eucalypt as a symbol of the broader Australian landscape.

This was also a time when newspapers and journals became an important vehicle for the dissemination of ideas and reflection on the social and economic structures of the emerging communities in North Queensland. A number of artists at that time, including Bevan (Townsville), Allom (Charters Towers) and John Gasking, were also journalists and illustrators.

However involved these artists were in their new communities they played no great part in the development of a wider art practice, as the beginnings of a discernible artist community in the North is a recent phenomenon.

Ray Crooke was perhaps the most prominent of a later group of professionally trained artists who settled permanently in the North. Crooke's choice of subject comprised pure landscape. His work features figures of Torres St Islanders and still life paintings with vibrant tropical flowers and fruit.

In their relationship with the Aborigines, artists like Crooke, had difficulty in capturing the intense spirituality of Northern Aborigines for canvas. He once said "I cannot honestly paint the Aboriginal poetry." A situation shared by other Northern Artists.

Ross Searle's "Artists in the Tropics" says that local artists after Ray Crooke, such as John Coburn (Ingham) have expressed a simpler belief in the abstract power of shape and colour. Searle further attributes to local artist Robert Preston, a perception that many Australian artists have looked at the purely expressive aspects of Aboriginal Art without regarding the symbolism of Aboriginal structures and forms.

The establishment of James Cook University in the early 1960's and the accreditation of Fine Arts courses in the Townsville TAFE, provided new professional opportunities for qualified artists, many of whom have stayed in North Queensland and are instrumental in the flourishing arts practice and exhibitions of our Region.

One of the first fully professional artists to establish permanent residence in North Queensland was Anneke Silver in 1961. Anneke, who was trained in the Netherlands and brought first hand knowledge of contemporary art, is a major influence in exploring our social structures and challenging environment.

A Contemporary Art Studio (Umbrella) is a recent and important addition to the Townsville professional Arts scene. The first shared arts space was organised by a group of TAFE graduates in 1987. While the Studio has had a number of locations (due to limited finance), the Board of Management is largely based on the artists and has now attracted community and Government financial support. Umbrella remains the main venue for experimental art in North Queensland.

### **Performing Arts**

While the visual arts occupied a more intense and personal perspective within the earlier communities of the Townsville Region, the performing arts and music captured much more of the community spirit of the times and broader focus for artistic expression and interpretation.

The first publicly owned performing arts theatre in Townsville was attached to the rear of the School of Arts in Cleveland Terrace. Designed to hold a capacity audience of 1000, it opened on 20 September 1877 with a Grand Ethiopian Entertainment, by the Townsville Orpheus Glee Club. This proved to be a variety concert with a wide range of acts including "The Ghost on Skates" (to the delight of the local children, no doubt).

During the succeeding years, amateur productions increased in number as groups of local artists formed a range of organisations. The Amateur Minstrels were joined by the Musical Union, the Town Band, the Townsville Liedertafel, the Townsville Garrick Dramatic Company, and the Townsville Philharmonic Society. In 1880 local singers staged the first performance of an oratorio.

In addition to the local performers, a wide range of visiting artists included Townsville in their touring itineraries. Among world-renowned performers who appeared at the School of Arts Theatre were Madame Carandini in 1879, the Hungarian violinist Remenyi (1886), the Jungfrau Kapelle and Alpine Choir from Switzerland (1888) and the London Minstrel Tourists, featuring the famous singer Charles Santley. The Australian composer Luscombe Searille brought his opera company north in 1886. Their repertoire comprised *La Fille de Madame Angot*, *La Perichole*, *Bobadil*, *The Bohemian Girl*, and *Isadora*. In 1887 the MacMahon Company presented another season of opera. In addition they appear to have staged Townsville's first pantomime, *Aladdin*, during the Christmas season 1887-1888.

Townsville at this time was a vibrant and cosmopolitan City with its busy Port, strategically situated on the major shipping lines across the world and the Australian East Coast.

In 1889 another privately owned theatre, the Norman Hall, opened at the corner of Sturt Street and Stokes Street. For a time the Norman Hall provided Townsville's only theatrical venue. It was a large timber structure, designed as a skating rink, with skating exhibitions alternating with theatrical presentations.

1892 witnessed the opening of Her Majesty's, attached to the new School of Arts at the corner of Walker Street and Stanley Street, a site which is now the headquarters of our own professional dance company, Dance North. The building became Townsville's main theatrical venue for the next nine years. Like the previous theatres, it witnessed a wide variety of performances by many visiting companies. The performance that confounded all critics, however, was the visit in 1894 by a Chinese opera company, performing in their native tongue. Since the largely European audience understood neither the language nor traditional Chinese music, it left them utterly amazed.

Another unusual troupe to visit Her Majesty's was the Lilliputian Opera Company, a group of children performing light opera and musical comedy. The troupe was formed by C.A. Pollard who had been prominent in local musical circles as a music teacher, conductor and the owner of a music shop. This company lasted for some years, touring the world.

By 1897 it was apparent that Her Majesty's was not large enough for the needs of the town; the stage was too small and the dressing room facilities inadequate.

When plans were drawn for a new Town Hall at the corner of Stokes and Flinders Streets, a theatre was included, attached to an hotel (later the Central Hotel) at the corner of the complex. Named the Theatre Royal, it was opened by the Governor of Queensland, Lord Lamington, in November 1900.

Townsville could support two theatres, but not three. While both Her Majesty's and the Theatre Royal survived, the Norman Hall closed to become a warehouse.

In 1903, however, Townsville was again reduced to one theatre after the onslaught of cyclone Leonta virtually destroyed His Majesty's (a Theatre name change because of monarchy succession in England). By mid-1904 restoration of His Majesty's was well under way, and the theatre continued in use into the 1920s.

Probably the most popular concert at His Majesty's was in 1909 when Madam Melba visited Townsville.

At the Theatre Royal in 1905, in a performance by students of the local West End State School, Gladys Moncrieff took a leading role in the *Pirates of Penzance*. It was the first appearance in light opera of a singer destined to become one of Australia's most popular musical stars.

A number of local talented young artists received great encouragement from appearances in the North Queensland Eisteddfod. The first Eisteddfod in Townsville was held in the Theatre Royal in 1906, which also witnessed the founding of the Juvenile Eisteddfod, another movement that has played an important role in fostering the talent of North Queensland children.

The Royal was also the venue for many popular local productions by the Townsville Popular Variety Minstrels, the Musical Union and other local groups. From 1919 to 1921 the Townsville Review Company presented a number of very successful musical comedies. Local performances alternated with those of many well-known companies and artists.

It is generally agreed that the most popular performer to appear at the Royal was Anna Pavlova in 1929. Pavlova's visit had a tremendous impact on one young woman in Townsville. Though too young to attend the concert, Ann Roberts was so greatly impressed by Pavlova's dancing that she too became involved in dance. Ann later founded the North Queensland Ballet Company, now Dance North; Pavlova's visit therefore had a lasting influence on the history of dance in North Queensland.

Though the Theatre Royal continued mainly as a venue for live entertainment, it also witnessed the introduction of theatre's greatest rival, the cinema. A touring picture company, Quintrell's Pictures, visited Townsville in 1909 and by 1910, Virgil Coyle, the licensee of the Central Hotel and manager of the theatre, appears to have introduced regular screenings of silent films at the Royal. These first picture shows were interspersed with live acts, vocalists, jugglers, gymnasts and other performers entertained the audience between films and during reel changes.

In 1910 Thomas Lowth and associates opened Townsville's first purpose-built cinema. By 1930, Townsville boasted two major picture palaces, the Paramount (later known as the Roxy) and the Wintergarden. The latter provided facilities for major live

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performances as well as moving pictures. It was the largest theatre in the north and one of the most famous provincial theatres in Australia. The opening performance was actually a live performance by the famous Shakespearean touring company led by Allan Wilkie who found the new theatre “excellent”. One of the most memorable productions in 1933 was the Choral and Orchestral Society performance of a concert version of *Carmen* with Adeline Bertheaueu as guest artist.

The Second World War was the most disruptive influence live theatre in Townsville has known. It was during this period that Townsville appears to have lost touch with much of its rich history of theatre. After the war His Majesty’s Theatre was converted to offices; the Wintergarden, though still used for live theatre, was regarded mainly as a cinema. The Royal was the only venue in the city solely dedicated to live theatre. Fewer touring companies passed through Townsville. The number of local performing groups had also dwindled. The Choral and Orchestral Society, however, regrouped and by the 1960s were again presenting an annual performance of a popular musical comedy; a new generation was introduced to the melodies of *The Desert Song*, *The Belle of New York*, *Rio Rita* and many more colourful operettas. The Queensland Symphony Orchestra visited on its annual tour of the state and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and other organisations presented an opera each year.

By the 1960s the Theatre Royal was proving inadequate for the needs of the growing city. The City Council of the time was keen to redevelop the site of the Town Hall complex. In 1967 tenders were prepared for this work. The site of the Central Hotel and the Theatre Royal was sold in 1972 and at the end of March 1973, the theatre closed; its demolition commenced in April 1973.

With the loss of the Theatre Royal, the Wintergarden became the major venue for live entertainment while His Majesty’s, rescued from oblivion during years of use as offices, enjoyed a revival.

During the 1960s and 1970s a number of amateur dramatic societies were formed and the Matchbox Theatre was established in a building in east Flinders Street. The Matchbox eventually became the Stagedoor Theatre, home of Townsville’s first resident theatre company.

The need for an air-conditioned theatre with modern facilities and equipment soon became obvious. The City Architect, Nigel Daniels, who undertook an extensive study of theatre design, was the chief designer of the complex. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 1978, five years after the commencement of the demolition of the Theatre Royal, the Civic Theatre opened with Variety Concert of local performers and the music of a Melbourne Show Band. The Civic Theatre is now established as the premier performing Arts venue for the Townsville region and hosts a variety of international, national and local productions.

The 1980’s saw the launch of an ambitious professional Theatre Company “New Moon”, sponsored by a consortium of Local Governments in North Queensland and also financially supported by State and Federal Governments.

The long term sustainability of such an ambitious program became evident about 1986, and while the Company folded, it actually became the catalyst for a local Townsville based professional Theatre Company “Tropic Line”. Two key members of Tropic Line, Jean Pierre Voos, the Company’s founder, and John Du Feu, along with Don Gallagher,

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Committee Chairperson have remained the lynch pin of Tropic Line, encouraging the use of the natural environment as adventurous performance space, local playwriting and providing opportunities for the skills of young actors and back stage operations.

The University's involvement in the development of a vibrant performing arts scene in Townsville and throughout North Queensland cannot be underestimated. Their graduate and undergraduate courses provide a range of skills for the performing arts and music. The University's Hard Sun Theatre Company emerged from a need to rebrand and present a wider and more focused image of theatre to the community. It has achieved this through partnerships with national and State based companies, as well as maintaining professional excellence for James Cook University students.

The community theatre movement is almost as old as Townsville and has had many name changes over a long and proud history. In later years The Townsville Little Theatre (an amalgamation of the St James Players and the Genesians) has moved around the City, seeking a permanent home and providing amateur actors with the opportunity to draw an audience into the excitement of Theatre. The La Luna Youth Theatre, which had its beginnings in the 1970's with youth sponsored arts activities through the Education Department, James Cook University, and community artists, is now a vibrant part of a multi purpose Youth Arts organisation. Community and Youth theatre are still seeking permanent homes.

In 1993, under the enthusiastic leadership of Stan Newman (then a Councillor with Townsville City Council), the One Act Play Festival was reborn. In association with the Civic Theatre, the One Act Play Festival draws amateur theatre groups from North and Central Queensland to Townsville on the May long weekend. The Festival gives exposure to the excellent work of community based theatre groups, and provides professional adjudication, directing, design and production skills.

## **Dance**

Any comment on the impact of Dance in the Townsville Region must draw reference to the energy and passionate commitment of Ann Roberts, who began her long career in Dance as a teacher, advocate and community activist in the 1940's. The long time commitment of Ann Roberts to community based and professional Dance has been instrumental in positioning the unparalleled strength of the North Queensland Ballet Company. The success of Townsville's own Dance North Company is one of the many organisations that owe their foundation and strength to Ann Roberts. Dance North and the Youth company "Extensions" have emerged from the North Queensland Ballet Company. Both companies have a national and international reputation for innovation and excellence and have a permanent home in the former School of Arts building.

Celtic and Highland Dance studios have been part of the regional dance culture for many decades. Their annual competitions still draw many young dancers and their instructors from across North Queensland, no doubt inspired lately by the upsurge in the popularisation of ethnic dance and cultural expression.

In recent times, newer settlers to Townsville have broadened our appreciation of dance and culture. The Islanders of the Pacific region and people from South East Asia constantly enrich our community festivals through the enjoyment of dance.

## **Literature and Libraries**

The development of literary skills in the Townsville region is closely linked with the history of the City's Library Service.

The early European foundation in the 1860's witnessed the first subscription Library, based in the School of Arts in Cleveland Terrace (the site of the future Supreme Court Building). The first Secretary of the Library Service was Mr E.W.Roberts. The Library moved in 1877 to the site where the School of Arts (Dance North Centre) now stands. The community interaction with the Library saw the integration of Library service with a range of classes in millinery, dressmaking, cooking, music, painting and commercial systems.

In 1938 the Community Committee, which had successfully developed an integrated community education system, stemming almost from the very first foundation of the City, handed over responsibility for the School of Arts Building and its services to the Townsville City Council.

The Townsville Daily Bulletin on July 9, 1938 commented that "His Worship the Mayor, J S Gill created a new era of history of Queensland by placing under the control of a Local Authority the first free municipal library in the State Government...This decision will throw open to the citizens of Townsville, especially the youth, the way to a wider education".

The Library then moved to the Council administration building in Flinders St. in 1941 and remained the major Library Service for the region until the Aitkenvale Branch opened in 1971. The major refurbishment of the Aitkenvale Library was completed in 2000 to accommodate the rapid social change and the increasing rate of technological development.

Townsville has encouraged a diverse range of local authors crossing many literary subjects. Boori (Monti) Pryor and Meme McDonald write in a story telling way of the pain and gentle hope of Aboriginal families and the land of the Kunggandji and Birri-Gubba people. Henry Reynolds has written numerous works about land rights, reflections on race, our black pioneers and the fate of a free people. Both Boori Pryor and Henry Reynolds have been significant in bringing a true sense of justice and honesty in race relations.

Ernestine Hill is one of the earliest authors on Townsville based history, with a focus on the Flying Doctor, memories of an education in a Catholic Convent school and the distant outback. Children's books are among the works by Jeanie Adams, Sue Brennan, and Bill Newman.

Dorothy Gibson-Wilde has given us important research into the early settlement "Gateway to a Golden Land" and a number of other books on historical aspects of the architecture and buildings of the region. A fascinating book on the "Pubs of Townsville 1864 –1914" raises a good thirst.

Les Hiddins, the Bush Tucker Man, calls Townsville home and is an important and prolific writer on Bush Tucker, the historical secrets of the Australian outback and

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exploration, the environment, and books for children. Les has rekindled a broad interest in a fascination of our history, especially the vast regions of our interior.

Townsville is the host City for the International Festival of Young Playwrights. This Festival is now a permanent fixture on Townsville's literary calendar and attracts over 100 young playwrights from many countries to be involved in workshops under the direction of internationally acclaimed tutors.

## **Music**

Townsville's musical history since the 1940's has been both rich and varied encompassing the broadest range of musical genres and finding outlets in a wide range of venues. Regular tours by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra have seen sell-out concerts at the Civic Theatre, but a more locally based orchestra has performed recent series at both the Catholic, Sacred Heart and Anglican, St James Cathedrals. The latter venue has also been a favourite for the Australian Festival of Chamber Music which has hosted various visiting chamber orchestras and ensembles as part of its annual two-week program. Other less conventional venues have included the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in the CBD, Jupiters Casino, Bishops Lodge - a stately old Queensland house on the hill - and some of the leafy and cool parks dotted across the city which have been home to the numerous outdoors festival events that mark the annual cultural calendar.

Over the past few decades musical events of national prominence have grown out of local music activities. The Australian Festival of Chamber Music, an annual event that offers the highest calibre of national and international classical music performances, began in 1991 and has steadily grown in reputation so that it now attracts devotees from across Australia. At the same time the Music Department of James Cook University was created which has given an enormous boost to the professionalism and expertise of the local musical scene by providing skills and training for new generations of musicians, instrumental and vocal teachers and school-based educators. It has played an important role in providing in-kind support and a performance and rehearsal venue for community organisations, as well as bringing into town the talents of highly skilled music staff.

Also playing a major role in the provision of local cultural activity has been the Townsville community Music Centre. It began in 1983 largely as a teaching referral service but has since adapted to community needs and is now recognised nationally as "the" major provider of concerts given by community and visiting artists and represents all facets of music from classical and chamber music, through to folk and jazz, pop and occasionally rock.

Longstanding musical organisations have featured in Townsville's vibrant cultural life over the past few decades including the North Queensland Opera and Music Theatre Group (NQOMT), and the Townsville and District Singers' Association which both celebrated 20 year anniversaries in 2001. The North Queensland Concerto and Vocal Competition began life a year earlier in 1980 as the North Queensland Piano Competition. In 1982 it was expanded to include other instrumentalists and two years later an Open section was added. 1988 saw new vocal and ensemble sections, and in 1996, sections for Young Performers, both soloist and ensembles. In 1997, a section titled 'Australiana' was dedicated to Dr Bill Williams the founder of the competition, in recognition of his efforts in promoting the works of contemporary Australian composers.



The Townsville Choral and Orchestral Society has a rich history in musical theatre and Eisteddfods, reaching back into the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a similar vein to the Welsh and English coal miners and port workers, Townsville drew its families into choral and orchestral entertainment and enjoyment. Early productions featured *The Desert Song*, and *The Belle of New York*, while recent audiences were enthralled with *Les Miserables*, *the Sound of Music*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *My Fair Lady*.

The North Queensland Opera and Music Theatre Group offers a wide and varied range of activities to people who share a common interest in the love of music and theatre. Led by artistic director Bill Munro, the group has gained a reputation of producing musicals of exceptional quality. *Man of La Mancha* in 1981, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Grease*, *Trial by Jury*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Godspel*, *Evita*, *Return to the Forbidden Planet* are some of the internationally famous musicals that have graced the Civic Theatre.

Jazz has a very strong presence in contemporary musical life in Townsville with two annual jazz festivals. Rock and pop music groups abound in the city's nightlife. String quartets, brass and wind bands, numerous choirs - both youth and adult - of very high standards, youth orchestras, and numerous ethnic musical and vocal groups all add to the flavour of life in Townsville. The many community and semi-professional groups find ample opportunities to perform either through outlets such as the Civic Theatre or the Music Centre, or at some of the regular festivals held throughout the year.

The rollicking tunes of Aussie Bush Ballads still resound around Townsville pubs, and Folk Festivals ensure earlier traditions of folk music and instruments are maintained.

## **Demography**

The Townsville region is expected to experience steady population growth during the next five years, rising to c.160,000 by 2005. Household income levels tend to concentrate in the middle-income brackets, with lower than State averages at the top and bottom end of the income scale. The population in the Townsville region is younger than in the rest of the State and the country as a whole.

The Social Atlas for Townsville also notes:

- the strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history of Townsville
- the decreasing level of mobility locally, leading to a less transient population than has been the case previously
- high levels of employment in the areas of government and defence
- a large increase in enrollments to James Cook University
- a lower proportion of over 65-year olds
- the importance of exports to the local economy

## **Recent & Current Developments**

A number of current and likely future developments in Townsville will create opportunities for new social, cultural and leisure infrastructure. These include:

- the Strand development, creating substantial new public realm adjacent to the CBD and residential areas
- the current preparation of the Town Plan and new statement of proposals
- the establishment of a public-private sector Task Force to address substantial CBD redevelopment
- the development of the Museum of Tropical Queensland with increased exhibition areas with artefacts and elements from the Pandora
- second stage re-development of the School of Arts Building, occupied by Dance North
- the construction of the Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Centre
- public art projects, in particular those linked with the Community Urban Renewal Program
- the creation of a new central library within the re-development of the CBD, and to redefine the purpose of the Library to meet a wider group of community needs for information services
- the integration of a knowledge centre with the Library
- the establishment of an Aboriginal resource centre at the Aitkenvale Library

## **CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

This section of the report provides information about current cultural facilities, activities, financial and human resources of City Council and other agencies, and provides a background to the comment on current strengths and weaknesses of the cultural sector in Townsville.

In addition to outdoor areas used for events, cultural **facilities** owned by the Council include:

- Perc Tucker Regional Gallery
- Townsville Civic Theatre
- School of Arts (under lease to Dance North)
- City Mall
- Libraries in Townsville and Aitkenvale
- Old Magistrates Court (housing Townsville Museum)
- The Strand Park

Council-promoted **activities** include:

- Perc Tucker Regional Gallery's program of exhibitions, education and special projects program
- the Library Service, including the City and Aitkenvale Libraries, mobile Neighbourhood Library Service, reference services, children's activities, and a home service for housebound individuals
- the Townsville Civic Theatre program of entrepreneured productions and hirings
- a range of special events and festivals, including:
  - Arts Cultural and Entertainment Awards
  - Eco Fiesta
  - Neighbourhood fun days
  - Palmer Street Community Festival and Jazz Festival
  - Seniors' Picnic and Lifestyle Expo
  - Summertime school holiday program
  - Welcoming Babies
  - Children's Festival
- Community events and festivals financially supported by the Council include:
  - Queensland Biennial Festival of Music
  - Australian Festival of Chamber Music
  - Multi cultural Festival
  - The Greek Festival
  - Magnetic Island Jazz Festival
  - Palmer Street Jazz Festival
  - International Young Playwrights Festival

Council's overall 2000 investment in cultural activity includes:

	<b>Library Services</b>	<b>Perc Tucker Regional Gallery</b>	<b>Townsville Civic Theatre</b>	<b>Cultural Development</b>	<b>Festivals</b>
<b>Capital</b>	18,000	199,600	285,000		
<b>Operational</b>	2,871,343	936,863	5,048,418	299,757	114,500
<b>Grants</b>	420,000	32,000		40,000	50,000
<b>Total expenditure</b>	3,309,343	1,168,463	5,333,418	339,757	164,500
<b>Income and recoverable expenditure</b>	483,000	551,700	4,283,450	42,000	50,000
<b>Net cost to Council</b>	2,826,343	616,763	1,049,968	297,757	114,500

The total net cost to Council is therefore:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Net Cost</b>
<b>Library Services</b>	2,826,343
<b>Perc Tucker Regional Gallery</b>	616,763
<b>Townsville Civic Theatre</b>	1,049,968
<b>Cultural Development</b>	297,757
<b>Festivals</b>	114,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,905,331</b>

Council's primary mechanism for development and delivery of cultural activity is through the Per Tucker Regional Gallery, the Civic Theatre and the Cultural Development Unit within the Community and Cultural Services Department. The Director of the Department is responsible for the staff and the business of the Department, and reports directly to Council's Chief Executive Officer.

There are a wide range of cultural facilities owned by organisations other than Council, ranging from the JCU Vincent and Douglas facilities (Sir George Kneipp, Gallery, Cowshed, and music rehearsal rooms) and Museum of Tropical Queensland to the Performing Arts Centre at Pimlico High School.

Other cultural facilities owned by organisations other than Council include:

- Museum of Tropical Queensland
- Great Barrier Reef Aquarium
- Ignatius Park High School
- Magnetic Island History and Craft Centre
- Maritime Museum of Townsville
- Reef HQ
- National Trust Heritage Centre
- North Queensland Military Museum
- North Queensland Opera and Music Theatre (rehearsal hall)
- Performing Arts Centre at William Ross High School
- Potters Association (kilns and gallery)
- Umbrella Contemporary Arts Studio

- RAAF Museum
- St Margaret Mary's College Cultural Centre
- The Lab
- Townsville Choral Society Hall
- Townsville Citizens Band Hall
- The Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre
- Woodturners Hall

Commercial galleries:

- North Queensland Potters Association
- Gallery Art Connections
- Vincent Art Gallery
- Arcadia Pottery Gallery
- Magnetic Island Galleries
- Gallery 10
- Jubinbara Gallery Australia
- North Queensland Potters Association Retail Shop
- Especially Australian
- Christopher's Studio Arts
- Flinders Gallery
- Teakle Art and Hair Studio

There is a range of community halls and other venues, church properties such as St James Cathedral and Sacred Heart Cathedral, and education facilities such as Townsville Grammar School and the TAFE that are used occasionally for cultural purposes. Outdoor events areas which are not Council-owned include Townsville Showgrounds, the Jupiter Townsville Casino and the Entertainment Centre.

Council also provides funding to a range of external organisations to meet operational and promotional costs.

Council has identified over 250 cultural organisations, including 47 music-related organisations, 37 dance-related organisations and a range of museums, visual arts, education and other bodies.

The level of financial investment in cultural activity by Townsville City Council in 2000 was \$4,905,331. Financial support for the Council and community based sector also comes from the Queensland State Government (Arts Queensland) and the Australia Council for the Arts (Commonwealth Government).

The State Government support for Council and Townsville based cultural organisations in 2000 was approximately \$1 million, while Commonwealth support through the Australia Council (excluding Playing Australia) was \$460,000 (c).

In summary, public sector support for arts and cultural activity in 2000 was:

<b>Source</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Townsville City Council</b>	4,905,331
<b>Queensland Government</b>	1,097,840
<b>Australia Council</b>	457,869
<b>Thuringowa City Council</b>	484,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,945,640</b>

These figures indicate a significant investment by the Townsville City Council in Arts and Cultural development, especially in staff costs, programs and public facilities. Some of this activity is of a regional nature, and is not appropriately recognised by central governments in policy and grants programs. The funds from Thuringowa City Council arise from the Joint Arrangements Agreement between the two Councils from 1998/99 and 1999/2000 Budgets.

## **SUMMARY OF CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS SURVEY**

Through a postal survey, cultural organisations were asked to identify how many performances or exhibitions they usually organise per year in Townsville. From the 52 responses given, it is estimated (using the mid-point of each range) an approximate total of 538 performances or exhibitions are produced per year by these respondents. These activities result from the presence of an active range of amateur/participatory cultural organisations, supplemented by the high level of output from Dance North, the Townsville Community Music Centre and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

In addition to their performances and exhibitions, cultural organisations were asked to identify other special projects (e.g. education and outreach work) which they had undertaken in the last year. Thirty-three organisations identified such projects.

Organisations were also asked to provide their views on strengths and weaknesses of cultural activity in Townsville. Common perceived strengths include cultural diversity and tolerance of this diversity, collaboration between arts groups, the local talent and a climate conducive to outdoors events. Townsville Civic Theatre, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Dance North, and the Palmer Street Jazz Festival were all mentioned several times as strengths in Townsville, as was the Townsville City Council's willingness to support the arts.

Cultural organisation respondents considered weaknesses locally to include a lack of recognition for local and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent as well as a low level of promotional support from local media and financial support from local businesses and corporations.

One of the most frequently mentioned weaknesses was the lack of an appropriate small venue (expressed as 200 – 300 seats) suitable for music, theatre, and community-based dance performances.

Some comments covered other areas of planning which have an impact on the cultural sector e.g. public transport, signage, accommodation, communication and accessibility for households in the widespread residential development of the Townsville region.

Organisations' views on possible improvements in different aspects of cultural provision in Townsville were canvassed.

In relation to performing arts the most frequent feedback was the need for a performance and rehearsal space suitable to (and affordable) for smaller groups. Several respondents considered Townsville Civic Theatre to be too large and costly to meet their needs. If a new smaller theatre/performance space is built, the preference is to have adjacent rehearsal spaces and administration offices, with suitable wooden flooring for dance groups.

In relation to visual arts facilities there were many positive comments on the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Several respondents indicated the need for more community based Gallery space.

While respondents to Council surveys felt that recent developments in museum and heritage facilities and programs are highly regarded, the community based museum structure is poorly funded and in need of greater community support and strategic direction.

In addition respondents indicated a need for more focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, more interaction between organisations especially in developing commonality with themes and in joint marketing.

A major recurring issue is with insufficient display and storage space.

Finally, cultural organisations were asked to rank a series of possible improvements to the cultural infrastructure of Townsville. 46 of the 54 respondents answered this section. The following are some of the most frequent responses:

- new or improved facilities, especially for the performing arts
- shared information between arts organisations
- an increased focus on regional activity and co-operation
- increased marketing resources
- enhanced professional skills:
  - financial
  - marketing
  - entrepreneurial
  - creative

It is notable that the issues of coordination and enhanced marketing were almost as highly ranked as the need for improved facilities.

## SUMMARY OF RESIDENTS SURVEY

The Consultancy Unit of the Council's Community Services Section conducted a survey of 413 residents to provide an opportunity for community input into the Cultural Planning Document. ***It is important to note that the survey was not a random sample of residents, but an attempt to interview people attracted to the City's arts and cultural venues and performances.***

Interviews were carried out in two major shopping centres (at a cultural information stall) as well as nearby key cultural facilities of the Townsville Civic Theatre, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery and the Aitkenvale and City Branch Libraries.

### Attendance Patterns

***If key cultural activities are selected and responses allocated according to the number of times attendances are reported in the last year, the following pattern emerges from people generally interested in the Arts.***

	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 or more</b>
<b><i>Drama/theatre performance</i></b>	47%	18%	14%	18%
<b><i>Opera</i></b>	96%	3%	0%	0%
<b><i>Ballet</i></b>	88%	6%	2%	2%
<b><i>Contemporary dance</i></b>	79%	11%	3%	5%
<b><i>Classical music concert</i></b>	76%	9%	4%	8%
<b><i>art exhibition</i></b>	49%	18%	12%	18%

The popularity of drama/theatre performances and art exhibitions is notable, as is the fact that approximately 50% of those surveyed had attended such events in the past year.

***The specific cultural facilities which respondents visited in the last year are indicated by the table below.***

<b><i>Cultural Facility</i></b>	<b><i>Number of responses</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of respondents</i></b>
<b><i>Townsville Civic Theatre</i></b>	265	64%
<b><i>Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre</i></b>	253	61%
<b><i>Aitkenvale Library</i></b>	194	47%
<b><i>Perc Tucker Regional Gallery</i></b>	193	47%
<b><i>City Branch Library</i></b>	165	40%
<b><i>other local Galleries</i></b>	93	23%
<b><i>School of Arts (Dance North)</i></b>	79	19%

Higher levels of attendance are recorded at major cultural facilities including the Townsville Civic Theatre, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery and the Libraries, as well as the Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre, where popular entertainment and sporting events are held.



## Attendance at Community Festivals

Attendance at festivals over the last two years has been high, with a comparatively low number of respondents reporting no attendance.

<b>Festival</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Palmer Street Festivals</b>	162	41%
<b>Community Events in Neighbourhood Parks</b>	114	29%
<b>Multicultural Festival on the Strand</b>	106	27%
<b>Eco Fiesta Lifestyle Expo</b>	85	21%
<b>Australian Festival of Chamber Music</b>	73	18%
<b>Queensland Biennial Festival of Music</b>	69	17%
<b>Greek Festival</b>	59	15%
<b>Reconciliation Concert</b>	40	10%
<b>Magnetic Island Jazz Festival</b>	31	8%
<b>other<sup>1</sup></b>	17	4%
<b>no attendances recorded</b>	102	26%

Higher levels of attendance are reported at those festivals which tend to be community orientated, informal, outdoors, affordable and often localised. Festivals which reflect the multicultural aspect of community life in Townsville are very popular.

## Information Sources

Respondents obtain information about cultural events and activities in Townsville from major media outlets (Townsville Bulletin, TV, radio and the free papers). Word of mouth also emerges as a key method of information dissemination.

<b>Information Sources</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
<b>Townsville Bulletin</b>	267	65%
<b>TV</b>	247	60%
<b>local radio</b>	220	53%
<b>free newspapers</b>	207	50%
<b>word of mouth</b>	205	50%
<b>Library</b>	98	24%
<b>cultural organisations</b>	56	14%
<b>Community Information Centre</b>	27	7%
<b>other<sup>2</sup></b>	21	5%

<sup>1</sup> This includes, for example, Palm Creek and Paluma Folk Festivals and the Italian Festival

<sup>2</sup> This includes the university, schools, community organisations and posters displayed in public places.

### **Factors Acting Against Involvement in Cultural Activities**

Cost emerged as the major factor in discouraging respondents from participating in cultural activities in Townsville.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
<i>more affordable prices/expense</i>	95
<i>more information/better marketing</i>	40
<i>wider range/more interesting activities</i>	38
<i>better public transport</i>	25
<i>more convenient performance/opening times</i>	19
<i>more entertainment for all age groups including families and children</i>	17
<i>more suitable and accessible locations including outdoors, parks, street entertainment</i>	16
<i>better parking</i>	13
<i>more multicultural entertainment</i>	13
<i>no response</i>	178

## SWOT ANALYSIS

The following summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is based upon the cultural organisations' and residents' surveys, and officer and consultant observations:

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p><b>Townsville</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ commitment of TCC to cultural development</li> <li>▪ direct Council provision – Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Libraries and the Townsville Civic Theatre</li> <li>▪ regional capital of North Queensland</li> <li>▪ diverse histories and identities</li> <li>▪ maritime heritage</li> <li>▪ retained architectural heritage and character of the city</li> <li>▪ recent Palmer Street and Strand improvements</li> <li>▪ commitment in recent developments in public art</li> <li>▪ tropical climate for outdoor performance</li> </ul> <p><b>Current activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ breadth of visual arts and crafts</li> <li>▪ the diversity of Magnetic Island</li> <li>▪ high level of attendance at cultural and community events</li> <li>▪ cultural festivals</li> <li>▪ multicultural events</li> <li>▪ dance infrastructure – youth involvement at dance schools</li> <li>▪ Extensions</li> <li>▪ Dance North, Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Townsville Civic Theatre, Umbrella Studio</li> <li>▪ Two art schools</li> <li>▪ Youth music scene</li> <li>▪ Music at community level, dance and visual arts at professional level</li> <li>▪ School orchestras/school activity</li> <li>▪ Regional Museum Resource Office</li> <li>▪ Supportive local media</li> <li>▪ Regional cultural tourism</li> <li>▪ Regional Arts Development</li> </ul>	<p><b>Current activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistent audience development and marketing activity</li> <li>▪ Dependence upon volunteers in the heritage sector</li> <li>▪ Capacity of arts groups to work together</li> <li>▪ Isolation from cultural activity outside Townsville</li> <li>▪ Costs of bringing in artists/exhibitions</li> <li>▪ Cost of exporting our product to other centres</li> <li>▪ The profile of literature and links with the Library Service</li> <li>▪ Under-developed film, multi-media, and video sectors</li> <li>▪ Absence of orchestral resources</li> <li>▪ Lack of opportunity for Aboriginal young people</li> <li>▪ Purchasing of local work/skills by Government and Council</li> <li>▪ Lack of professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</li> <li>▪ Professional skills development opportunities</li> <li>▪ Over supply of activities in July</li> </ul> <p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Townsville Civic Theatre considered too expensive to hire by community groups</li> <li>▪ Absence of disabled access to some venues</li> <li>▪ Need for a small, affordable flat-floor studio theatre space</li> <li>▪ Need for better office/administrative accommodation for some cultural organisations</li> <li>▪ Lack of retail outlets for artists' work</li> <li>▪ Uneven spread of infrastructure and social capital throughout all neighbourhoods</li> <li>▪ A strong social history museum</li> <li>▪ Lack of information and signage on of sites of cultural and historical significance</li> <li>▪ Poor public transport</li> <li>▪ Lack of integration between broader community and JCU</li> <li>▪ Low levels of support from state-wide funded cultural agencies</li> <li>▪ Lack of negotiated partnerships with State Government Departments</li> <li>▪ Absence of links with other relevant sectors e.g business, tourism and sport</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CBD re-development incorporating some aspects of arts accommodation</li> <li>▪ Creation of new areas in the public realm such as The Strand</li> <li>▪ opening of new Museum and Pandora exhibit</li> <li>▪ development of new space for visual arts</li> <li>▪ development of School of Arts Building</li> <li>▪ future development of new small scale performance space</li> <li>▪ position of Community Relations Officer (Multiculturalism) in Council</li> <li>▪ Council website</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of Children’s Festival</li> <li>▪ increase amount of professional product coming in through festivals and networks</li> <li>▪ The Queensland Biennial Festival of Music,</li> <li>▪ The Regional Arts Strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential relationship between two local theatre groups</li> <li>▪ Development of new partnerships between Townsville Civic Theatre and local professional arts groups</li> <li>▪ move towards implementing mechanisms proposed through the Integrated Planning Agreement</li> <li>▪ developing closer communication and working partnerships with other Council Departments</li> <li>▪ partnerships to be created with State Government as a result of the Art Built In Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Professional development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ more purchasing of creative skills in region by public and private sectors</li> <li>▪ growing community support for cultural activities</li> <li>▪ development of further cultural opportunities for the involvement of young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ development of competition particularly in sport and other forms of recreation</li> <li>▪ pressure on public sector resources</li> <li>▪ GST and its implications for leisure spending</li> </ul>

## **Summary**

Townsville enjoys a growing population and relatively buoyant economy. There is a strong sense of pride and independence in the arts and cultural sector, as in the community as a whole. The initiative of dedicated individuals and the active support of City Council, supplemented by State and Federal resources, has led to key strengths in dance, music and the visual arts, as well as significant resources in theatre, heritage and library services.

The current Strand and forthcoming CBD redevelopments, and the proactive role that Council plays in neighbourhood development, represent great opportunities for future cultural development in Townsville.

A number of weaknesses in cultural activity and infrastructure have also been identified. These include:

- the absence of a suitable small-scale performance space and suitable outdoor performance area
- the lack of effective networks and linkages between cultural organisations
- the need to develop further the local infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts
- the absence of professional development support amongst the arts community
- an inclusive local history museum.

These weaknesses can be addressed and opportunities developed if Council and the Arts community:

- provide leadership in developing strong networks within the cultural sector
- establish strong internal communications to support corporate planning and implementation of cultural activity and infrastructure
- secure maximum benefit from partnerships with JCU, CBD Task Force, State Government, Australia Council and private sector interests locally
- continue to embrace a broad definition of culture, which extends beyond the amateur and professional arts sectors to other aspects of lifestyle and local environment
- continue to cooperate with Regional structures of cultural development, especially through Local Government
- engage with the State Government for the inclusion of a Heritage Trails network that supports Townsville's Historical Museum development
- engage with the State and Commonwealth Governments about a more equitable distribution of funding for cultural development in the Townsville Region.

## PART THREE

This section of the report presents a framework for Cultural Planning for Townsville. It includes:

- statements of vision and principles
- aims for Cultural Planning
- proposed strategies for achieving the aims

### STATEMENT OF VISION

The Vision for Townsville is presented in the City Council's Corporate Plan for 1998-2001:

**To ensure Townsville is a prosperous, vibrant, tropical city where people enjoy living and working.**

A proposed vision for Townsville's cultural plan is:

**To support the vision of Townsville through the integration of cultural development and creative activity into all aspects of city planning and environment.**

### STATEMENT OF PRINCIPALS

The following Guiding Principles, which are adopted from the Townsville-Thuringowa Strategy Plan, will inform the continued approach to cultural planning:

**Equity.** Services should be planned and provided on a basis that promotes equality of opportunity regardless of gender, age, race, ability or location and addresses current disadvantage to promote equality of outcomes.

**Access.** Services should be planned and provided so as to promote their accessibility which should not be limited by means, status, or abilities of users or the location of services.

**Universality.** Services should be planned on a basis of availability to all. Services may be provided in a selective way, ie, through targeting or means testing.

**Cultural responsiveness.** Services should be planned and provided to positively reflect cultural diversity.

**Effectiveness and efficiency.** Services should be planned and provided in a financial and resource efficient manner to meet stated community objectives including high quality and affordability.

**Co-ordination.** Services should be planned on the basis of their interlinkages and provided in a way that ensures an integrated range of services and service types for users, and promotes supportive networks between people.

**Consultation.** The planning and provision of services will be assisted through communication with users, community groups, government departments and other agencies so as to ensure a match between local needs and priorities and the funding of services.

**Participation.** The planning and provision of services will encourage the involvement of users and the wider community to ensure community acceptance of outcomes.

## **AIMS**

It is proposed that the principal aims within Townsville City Council's Cultural Plan are to support the Vision for Townsville through:

- integrating cultural development and creative activity into local and regional planning
- creating opportunities for all residents to participate in a wide range of cultural activity
- identifying partnership opportunities through which Council resources can be leveraged to maximum effect
- creating the most appropriate internal infrastructure in the Community and Cultural Development Department to support the Vision for Townsville
- implementing strategies for the following identified key policy areas:
  - to sustain a strong professional arts and cultural infrastructure accessible to all Townsville residents,
  - to enable Townsville City Council to fulfil its responsibility as a key, strategic agency for cultural development and recognise the City as the regional capital for arts and cultural development,
  - to further identify and implement ways in which arts and cultural activity can contribute to community and neighbourhood development,
  - to harness the benefits which arts and cultural activity can bring to Townsville's tourism initiatives and facilities,

- to recognise the special significance of the area's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to an holistic cultural life for Townsville and work with the Elders of these communities and the communities as a whole, on the development and promotion of cultural and artistic activity,
- to optimise the opportunities for public art to contribute to an attractive and stimulating built environment, and to the community's appreciation and knowledge of the visual arts.

## **STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING THE AIMS**

### **Integrating cultural development and creative activity into local and regional planning**

This will be achieved through the Council's Cultural staff working closely with other bodies involved in all aspects of local and regional planning and integrating cultural issues within broader planning frameworks.

#### **Integrated Area Planning**

The Integrated Area Planning Act (IPA) 1997, is a State legislative framework for local government planning schemes which supports an holistic approach linking all economic, physical and social issues in the future development of communities. The primary purpose of the Act is to support ecological sustainability, which is defined in the document as including:

maintenance of the cultural, economic, physical and social well-being of people and communities (1.3.3)

This is seen as occurring if:

well serviced communities with affordable efficient safe and sustainable development are created and maintained,

areas and places of special aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific, social or spiritual significance are conserved or enhanced; and

integrated networks of pleasant and safe public areas for aesthetic enjoyment and cultural, recreational or social interaction are provided (1.3.6 c)

The Act promotes partnership between all spheres of government active in land use planning and all representatives in a community.



## **The Town Plan**

The preparation of the Town Plan is an important mechanism for Council to integrate physical, social, cultural, economic and environmental planning to ensure appropriate development for all sections of the community.

### **Areas for Integration**

Cultural and lifestyle issues, including the arts and creativity are not something which are necessarily the domain of one local government department, just as social and economic issues affect a range of Council services and strategies for delivery.

Townsville City Council's Community and Cultural Services Department is uniquely placed to assist and advise other departments on cultural issues and opportunities relevant to developments in the city. This could incorporate two specific areas:

- advice and assistance through assessment of the cultural impact of developments proposed in the city, including community consultation.
- advice and assistance with the integration of arts and creative activity into specific areas of service delivery.

### **Cultural Impact and Community Consultation**

The IPA recognises that the inclusion of cultural heritage and contemporary cultural issues in the planning of communities is important to the overall aim of ecological sustainability. To achieve such, the Council can be aware of the cultural issues of importance to the overall community, and of each neighbourhood. For example;

- places and sites of specific cultural significance (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, European and other cultures, historical and contemporary, built and natural)
- resources (physical and human) required for on-going cultural development

Community & Cultural Services Department can develop and provide for other Council Departments:

- protocols for Council's engagement with the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population
- guidelines for cultural impact assessments
- guidelines for the integration of public art into capital schemes
- database of all places and sites of cultural significance

### **Integration of Arts and Creative Activity**

As well as providing assistance with the integration of cultural issues into the broader planning framework, there is also the opportunity for Council's Community & Cultural Services Department to assist and advise other Council Departments on the integration of art and creative opportunities into many aspects of service delivery. This would be done within the context of the proposed key policy areas and would further enhance Council's Corporate vision.

This could include:

- Working closely with the Public Relations Department to ensure all cultural promotional activity, including larger scale events, reflects the key cultural policy areas of Council as outlined in this plan.
- The development of partnerships between cultural services provided by Council e.g The Perc Tucker Regional Gallery and other departments to achieve mutual objectives -- for example the development of a project on environmental education for young people during the Children's Festival.
- The employment of artists and designers at the early stages of planning and development for any capital scheme or open space development.
- The engagement of leading artists and performers in the community in broader planning forums.
- The commissioning of local artists and arts organisations for specific promotional and educational activities for Council.

#### **Internal Communication within Community & Cultural Services**

Suggested strategies for promoting internally the skills and services of the staff of the Department are.

- develop for Council the priority areas for arts and cultural development over the next five years.
- develop promotional tools for promoting the skills and services including:
  - presentations to other departments
  - invitations for Council Officers to cultural events
  - publications outlining examples of integration
- develop specific strategies for communication to individuals in key areas for example:
  - to Councillors to ensure overall support and understanding of Cultural activities and events
  - to engage senior officers for support and consideration of the areas of activity where planning integration will be most frequently required
  - to other officers for the development of day to day procedures and protocols
  - to all customer-contact staff to ensure consistent communication to the community at large, and to enhance the Council's effectiveness by providing relevant and timely feedback

**Creating opportunities for all residents to participate in a wide range of cultural activity.**

The residents' survey undertaken as part of the consultation process, clearly identified the need for Council to ensure that all parts of the community gained access to cultural and creative activity. A number of issues relating to the community's participation and access to cultural activities can be addressed through strategies developed in each of the key policy areas.

There are also some over-riding strategic directions that Council's Community & Cultural Services Department could take in order to achieve the aim of ensuring access for all residents. These could include but are not limited to:

- encouraging professional arts organisations supported by Council to develop projects which take their work into neighbourhoods
- developing specific strategies for the involvement and participation by certain sections of the community for example young people, including:
  - open days
  - young peoples' involvement in program planning
  - continuing to harness the program and marketing expertise of specialist agencies, such as La Luna and The Lab
  - regular consultation processes with teachers and youth leaders
  - establishment of Performance Indicators related to young people's participation in Council activities
  - working with Council's Youth Council on forward planning
- the development of incentives and initiatives for all residents to have access to cultural facilities for example the aged, the disabled, household carers, parents of young children
- flexible pricing policies for City Council promoted activity to ensure access for all citizens
- the use of research staff to provide a communications link into specific communities
- regular consultation with communities on their cultural needs including the evaluation of specific areas of activity

**Identifying partnership opportunities through which Council resources can be leveraged to maximum effect**

The successful implementation of Townsville's Cultural Plan will be dependent on forming partnerships and co-ordinated strategies with a range of external partners. The following provides a summary of those organisations identified by the consultants as being key partners, with additional detail for some of the principal agencies. Specific strategies for developing partnerships will be further identified under each key policy area. However, the staff of the Cultural area of Council also need to prepare an external communications strategy to communicate their vision to potential partners.

**External Communication Strategy**

The following are suggested steps for communicating externally the principles and strategies contained in the Plan:

- confirm the key messages to be communicated from this planning document, in particular the priority areas for the Council over the next two years
- produce a Summary version of the Plan
- brief the Youth Council and Advisory groups to be effective ambassadors for the Cultural Plan
- organise a press/media launch, to which partner organisations should be invited
- distribute the Summary to partner organisations, highlighting ways in which that specific partner can assist, and benefit from, the implementation of the Plan
- organise round-table sessions (or working lunches) with partner-groups on a sectoral basis to explore partnership opportunities and respond to queries
- follow up with individual meetings
- identify media-worthy milestones during implementation of the Plan

**External Partners**

The following have been identified as key external partners for which individual communications plans need to be developed.

The Community

A summary of this Planning Document and the strategies which are developed must be shared with the community for their comments and be subject to regular evaluation

Local and Regional Artists and Cultural Organisations

The Council has already identified a wide range of cultural organisations providing services and activities locally, many of which have been consulted during the preparation of the Cultural Plan. The organisations and individual artists can form key partners in cultural development and delivery.

Three related issues in harnessing the energy and expertise of local artists and cultural organisations are:

1. the nurturing of effective networks
2. the encouragement of leadership
3. the development of funding agreements which link the outputs expected from funded organisations to the strategies contained in this Plan

#### Queensland State Government

State Government is one of the key partners in development of the cultural sector in Townsville. The Integrated Planning Act, 1997, creates an encouraging framework within which local government and State Government can implement informed decision-making in relation to local and regional social and cultural planning.

#### Arts Queensland

The principal instrument of State Government support for the arts is Arts Queensland, which provides ongoing and project support for arts organisations, and manages a number of funding programs.

The Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) provides a reasonable level of devolved funding for decisions on arts development in the Townsville area to be taken at a local level. RADF focuses on one-off project based financial support for the professional development and employment of arts and cultural workers.

Regional Arts Fund provides devolved Federal funding with a current focus on regional arts activity, collaboration and partnerships between artists, organisations and intra-State organisations. Successful negotiation by Local Government in North Queensland has been instrumental in establishing a Regional Hub for Cultural Development and a regional cultural worker to assist Councils and communities with Arts practice and infrastructure.

A number of other programs managed by Arts Queensland are of potential benefit to Townsville, ranging from the Regional Writing Fund and Youth Mentor Program to the Cultural Development Officer Program and Collaborative Design Fund. An annual Programs of Assistance Handbook is published by Arts Queensland.

For continuing discussions with Arts Queensland it is important that:

1. Council support the establishment of Arts protocol between the LGAQ and Arts Queensland for strategic communication between the State and Local Government in Queensland.
2. Council maintain strategic communication with Officers of Arts Queensland and encourage Council personnel to be involved in State Arts Advisory Committees and Boards of Northern Australia Regional Performing Arts Association and the Regional Galleries Association of Queensland.
3. Council harness the support of some of its other partners within the City in presenting an united front to State Government (e.g. engage representatives from the education and business sectors in discussion on Townsville's future role).

#### The Public Art Agency

The Queensland Government's public art policy commits 2% of State building project costs towards the integration of art and design by Queensland artists and art workers. The details of the policy, the guidelines and implementation are being managed by Arts Queensland's Public Art Agency. There are considerable opportunities for the Council to work closely with the agency on:

- the integration of art and design into partnership projects between State and Local Government
- the development of best practice guidelines for Townsville's own developments in particular the provision of guidelines for private sector developers
- the development of temporary and project based public art opportunities in the city
- the training of local artists and arts workers in public art practice and project management

Other Departments of State Government which could be important external partners to the development of Townsville's cultural plan include:

#### Department of Public Works and Housing and Project Services

- Through the implementation of the State Government's Art Built In policy in a range of State-led capital developments;

#### Department of State Development

- Through the development of the professional arts and cultural industries in the city.
- Links to developing businesses in the area;

#### Department of Health

- Through the implementation of the Art Built In policy within capital developments and through partnership opportunities to encourage cultural and creative activity in the health sector;

### Department of Education

- Through the development of partnership activity with schools and young people.

### **Other Regional Local Governments**

The City needs to work in close partnership with other Councils within the Northern Region in the implementation of this Plan. This would include Hinchinbrook, Thuringowa, Charters Towers, Hughenden, Richmond and the Burdekin. Some strands of cultural planning (such as cultural tourism development) will particularly benefit from cooperative working between several local governments in the region.

### **Federal Cultural Funding**

The Australia Council is a Commonwealth statutory authority charged with formulating and implementing policies to support the practice and appreciation of the arts, and to provide advice to the Federal Government on arts-related issues. The Australia Council currently provides continuing or project funding to a number of organisations in Townsville. In addition to providing support for specific art-forms, the Australia Council also provides funding in the fields of festival activity and audience development initiatives. A full description of grant regimes is published annually in the Australia Council's *Support for the Arts Handbook*.

Innovative approaches to arts or audience development, and initiatives which have implications beyond the purely local have the potential to be of interest to the Australia Council.

The Queensland Government noted in its submission to the Major Performing Arts Inquiry a significant inequity between funds from the Australia Council devoted to Queensland projects and those received by projects in other states. This may create an opportunity that can be more fully exploited by Townsville based arts organisations and local government.

In addition to seeking partnership and funding for its own direct initiatives, Townsville City Council can assist in maximising resources by ensuring that local artists and arts organisations are familiar with the range of funding programs and criteria applied by the Australia Council.

The following are examples of ways in which City Council may partner the Australia Council:

- cooperative marketing and audience development initiatives
- benchmarking projects
- arts-business partnerships
- artform developments, with costs shared between City Council and Australia Council
- amateur-professional partnerships, where Australia Council may support the professional fees
- residences of artists in non-arts organisations
- touring professional work into Townsville

### **Cultural Organisations with State-wide Responsibilities**

The State Government supports a range of agencies with state wide cultural and arts development responsibilities. These include amongst others:

- Regional Galleries Association of Queensland
- Queensland Community Arts Network
- Queensland Artworkers Alliance
- Northern Australia Performing Arts Association
- Crafts Council of Queensland
- Queensland Writers Centre
- Ausdance
- Playlab
- Flying Arts
- The Queensland Arts Council

Other potential partners include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
- Tourism Queensland
- The State Library of Queensland

### **The Business Community**

It is timely for Council to consider its developing links with the business community in consultation with the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities, which is actively developing strategies to strengthen links between arts and business. Other partners will include:

- CBD Task Force
- Townsville Enterprise Ltd (TEL)
- Chamber of Commerce
- State Development Department
- Individual businesses

#### **Townsville Enterprise Limited**

Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL) is an agency with responsibility for promoting the economic well-being of Townsville. This includes encouraging local infrastructure investment, attraction and promotion of conventions and special events activity, tourism strategy and information services. TEL plays a research, development and advocacy role in relation to major economic development opportunities. It has also been active in supporting both sports and arts activities within the framework of generating tourism and/or raising the profile of Townsville.

The importance of a vibrant arts and cultural life for inward investment has been recognised in a number of economic impact studies – senior management have a strong propensity to attend arts activities and consider the strength of the cultural offer in relocation decisions, alongside harder economic rationales.



The following are examples of ways in which Townsville City Council could partner TEL:

- through facilitating opportunities to use the arts as an attraction for inward investment
- through supporting the inclusion of arts and cultural activity within trade missions
- through nurturing art and industry linkages
- through facilitating sponsorship introductions
- through using the arts in conventions and special events
- through supporting training and briefing of volunteers in relation to Cultural Tourism development

There is significant potential for the broader business community to support the implementation of the Plan through provision of:

- financial support, in the form of sponsorship or patronage
- provision of goods and services in-kind or on a low-cost basis
- provision of expertise, such as marketing, financial planning or technical (either to Council or to individual cultural organisations)
- access to employees and their families as audiences or participants
- co-hosting round-table sessions or presentations to promote the key cultural strategies

#### Queensland Travel and Tourism Corporation

The Travel and Tourism Corporation's adoption of a Cultural Tourism Framework can create opportunities for a range of regional projects in liaison with Council and Regional Organisations. These projects might include:

- shared promotional packages targeted at intrastate and interstate visitors
- cultural-focused packages targeted at the visiting family and friends market
- integration with other promotional initiatives focusing on North Queensland and Far North Queensland
- regular cultural activity briefings for hotel concierges, restaurateurs and others involved in direct delivery – possibly co-hosted by Tourism Queensland
- training and other business advice to support the development of visual arts and craft production and retailing targeted at the business or leisure visitor, possibly facilitated by Tourism Queensland

**Creating the most appropriate internal infrastructure in the Department of Community and Cultural Development to support the Vision for Townsville**

#### **Human Resources**

In further developing and implementing the strategies proposed in this Cultural Planning Document, City Council will need to consider the staffing implications.

While a number of the strategies can be realised through existing infrastructure and resources (within Council or partner organisations), the overall level of development is likely to require strengthening of the resources and a restructure in Community and Cultural Services.

The outcome is for the Social Planning, Recreation Planning and Services, Neighbourhood development, Youth development and Cultural planning and development to come under one Manager (Community Development section)

This will enable one person in the Department, reporting to the Director, with responsibility for ensuring delivery of the strategies that Council adopts from this planning framework. The reason for this is that each of the second-tier officers reporting to the Director has a full workload related to operational delivery of services – Theatre, Gallery, Library Services. These are demanding management posts that require a full-time commitment, leaving little scope for additional developmental work.

A specific recommendation has been made under the key policy area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts for the appointment of an Officer to deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural issues. This will require strategic communication within the Indigenous community on the responsibilities for management, location and responsibilities.

The Consultants assisting with the Report suggested for investigation that:

- an additional post at manager level be created to steer implementation of the adopted strategies from this planning document, and integrate each section of the Department into the process of implementation [already in place]
- that a training needs analysis be undertaken, to assess the Department's current skills base against those required to implement the strategies in this planning document; and that a training plan be developed to meet any skills gaps identified
- that Department officers review their operational plans for period 2001 – 2003 to ensure they reflect the strategies adopted from this planning document, and consider resource requirements and priorities
- that implementation of the operational plans be reviewed within regular management team meetings and within the individual officers' appraisal process
- that the skills of partners outside Council be harnessed wherever possible, to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning document.

### **Council's Role**

As the depth and breadth of cultural activity in Townsville continues to grow, Council will also need to consider its overall function with regard to cultural development, particularly the clarity of its role as enabler and provider.

Subject to Council's general approach to internal management, it will be important for the boundaries of direct Council cultural provision to be confirmed, and to outsource any activity which does not fall within these boundaries.

The Consultants assisting with the Report have suggested that:

- the Director of Community and Cultural Services consider establishment of specifications which describe service delivery levels and outcomes for each service sector from 2001/03

### **Implementing strategies for identified key policy areas**

Through analysis of the research undertaken with residents and cultural organisations followed by group sessions with Council officers, the following are the key policy areas, which have emerged and from which Townsville City Council could develop strategies and action plans for the next three years.

#### Professional Arts and Cultural Industries

- *to sustain a strong professional arts and cultural infrastructure*

#### Regional Capital for the Arts and Cultural Development

- *to enable Townsville City Council to fulfil its responsibility as a key, strategic agency for cultural development in North Queensland and recognise the city as the regional capital for arts and cultural development*

#### Community and Neighbourhood Development

- *to further identify and implement ways in which arts and cultural activity can contribute to community and neighbourhood development*

#### Cultural Tourism

- *to harness the benefits which arts and cultural activity can bring to Townsville's tourism offer*

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts and Cultural Development

- *to recognise the special significance of the area's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to an holistic cultural life for Townsville and work with the Elders Advisory Committee and the communities themselves on the development and promotion of cultural and artistic activity*

#### Public Art – Integrated Art and Design

- *to optimise the opportunities for public art to contribute to an attractive and stimulating built environment, and to the community's appreciation and knowledge of the visual arts*

## **Professional Arts and Cultural Industries**

Professional artists and art workers are those earning a full or part time wage from their skills. They may be employed by funded arts organisations such as Dance North or the Festival of Chamber Music or Umbrella Studio, commercial businesses such as Graphic Designers or operate as sole traders and small businesses. As well as creative people, the arts industry directly supports art workers with administrative, technical and teaching skills.

Professional arts organisations and artists (both visual and performing) play a number of roles in the life of a community. As well as enriching the cultural life of a community with their own work and creativity, they can provide access through networks and knowledge of their artform to a range of product not readily accessible to the community. They can assist community based arts organisations in their own development through advice and training. They also have an important economic role to play as an industry in their own right and through links with other sectors such as tourism.

Townsville has a unique and in some cases very mature professional arts scene. It is characterised by a long history of development in some artforms such as dance and the visual arts, and by a local government which has supported professional arts activity longer than most in the State. Traditionally professional artists and arts organisations in Queensland have been supported through the State Government. The role of local government has been largely in the realms of community cultural development. Through the creation of the Townsville Civic Theatre and the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery and provision of support to State funded professional arts organisations and activities such as Dance North, Umbrella Studio, the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music and Tropic Line Theatre, Townsville City Council has acknowledged and implemented a broader role in the cultural development of the community.

## **Regional Capital for Arts and Cultural Development**

In both an economic and social sense Townsville is the regional capital for North Queensland. It is also the cultural capital, in the sense of the resources and scale of cultural organisations based in the City, and the access residents from the region and tourists have to those resources. The cultural resources provided by institutions in Townsville in terms of education at James Cook University and advice and development through organisations such as the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery and independent arts organisations are also extremely important to the development of individual creative artists in the region.

Townsville City Council recognises it has a leadership role to play in encouraging and assisting regional cultural development, particularly at a time when State Government is considering the most appropriate delivery mechanisms for regional cultural activity.

## **Community and Neighbourhood Development**

This is an area in which Townsville City Council has been particularly strong over the last few years, with an approach and a range of activities which have often acted as a benchmark for other local governments. The Council has recognised the importance of strengthening and promoting local culture in the process of community capacity building.

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Support has been provided for local cultural initiatives, in particular in the form of festivals and community celebrations and public art activities linked to neighbourhood regeneration. Projects concerned with recording the social and cultural histories of different neighbourhoods and those which celebrate a sense of identity and a sense of place are all viewed as being of importance in the strengthening and development of communities. Where possible the Council has encouraged partnerships between local communities and professional artists.

Cultural identity does not necessarily recognise geographic boundaries and the culture of Townsville is also expressed by the many local arts and cultural groups that individuals join in their leisure time to develop their specific skills or interests. These organisations are amateur based and produce regular seasons in a professional environment. There are considerable partnership opportunities to be developed between this activity and professional arts organisations, particularly in the areas of training and access to resources.

### **Cultural Tourism**

Cultural tourism entails the integration of arts and cultural product with mainstream tourism – to enhance visitor appeal and invigorate regional tourist destinations. Tourism Queensland (formerly Queensland Tourism and Travel Corporation, or QTTC), adopted the following definition of cultural tourism when developing its Cultural Tourism Framework in 1997, which was a joint initiative of the then QTTC and Arts Queensland:

*the practice of traveling to experience the distinctive culture of a destination – the lifestyle, heritage, arts and industries of its residents – and the business of presenting and interpreting that culture to travelers*

The Framework identifies a number of strategies by which arts and cultural product will be integrated. Amongst others, these include:

- the development of long-term strategic marketing partnerships between the tourism and arts and cultural sectors
- the development of regionally based Cultural Tourism product, including product targeted to meet the needs of specific visitor markets

The development of this joint working also led to the appointment of a Cultural Tourism Officer, co-funded by Tourism Queensland and Arts Queensland, to facilitate future initiatives.

These and other strategies represent opportunities for Townsville and its arts and cultural sector, especially in view of the city's status as regional capital.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts and Cultural Development**

The 1996 Census indicates that 4.5% of the Townsville regional population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. There is a perception in the community that this figure is low and under representative of the community, although the percentage is higher than for Queensland (2.8%) and Australia as a whole (2%). There is one Officer

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in Council, responsible for a range of issues and government services specifically affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and its development. There is no Officer in the community with specific responsibility for arts and creative development. While Council has in the past sought resources from other spheres of Government for specific positions relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural development, it may be opportune with the development of the Cultural Centre for efforts to be renewed for specialist arts and cultural workers.

The employment structure and the broad community support from existing Arts and Cultural Organisations will be critical for the professional support of such workers.

The desire to see development and a higher profile given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts in the City was identified quite clearly through all aspects of the consultation process. However, the creation of a policy for such must be progressed hand in hand with the development of a whole of government policy and protocols for working in partnership with those communities in Townsville.

The establishment of the Cultural Centre will be a significant step for the whole community to appreciate and enjoy the Indigenous heritage and culture.

### **Public Art - The Integration of Art and Design**

Townsville City Council's experience of Public Art projects has been particularly in creating components in urban renewal schemes such as Garbutt and South Townsville. These programs have been corporately managed by Community and Cultural Services Department and have succeeded in integrating art and effective public design into the redevelopment. The partnership with the State Government has been critical to the effective management of the programs.

Council has a written policy in place for Public Art.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS/ACTION PLAN**

The consultants for the Cultural Plan provided an action plan for Council and for discussion with the Townsville community. The Action Plan is based on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Strategies and Partners structure. It provides a basis for engagement under the headings of

- Professional Arts and Cultural Development
- Regional Capital for Arts and Cultural Development
- Community and Neighbourhood Development
- Cultural Tourism
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts and Cultural Activities
- Public Art

These action plans will form the basis of the consultation and planning by the Council with the Townsville community over the next three years. The plans will also be discussed with the relevant Commonwealth and State Government Departments to seek commitments in policy and project funding.

## PROFESSIONAL ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Aim

*to sustain a strong professional arts and cultural infrastructure accessible to all Townsville's residents*

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of organisations and product available</li> <li>• Direct Council provision as well as independent provision</li> <li>• Music – specifically AFCM and more recently the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music</li> <li>• Dance - Dance North and long tradition of community involvement</li> <li>• Sense of identity that professional artists and arts organisations have with the City and region</li> <li>• Umbrella Contemporary Arts Program</li> <li>• Creation of new outdoor public areas such as The Strand</li> <li>• Development of School of Arts Building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of coordination in planning for development of professional activity between City and State</li> <li>• Isolation from decision makers in Brisbane</li> <li>• Organisations not always working together particularly in marketing and audience development</li> <li>• Arts accommodation problems</li> <li>• Community perceptions of elitism</li> <li>• Poor disabled access to some venues</li> <li>• Lack of professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts profile and development</li> <li>• Lack of small scale theatre and writing, film, multi-media and video developments</li> <li>• Opportunities for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of more cooperative working between arts organisations</li> <li>• Development of same between City and State through Regional Arts Strategy</li> <li>• CBD and other developments resolving arts accommodation issues</li> <li>• Development of small scale performance space</li> <li>• Development of new festivals and projects to attract national and international professional artists</li> <li>• Development of Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Centre</li> <li>• Increasing opportunities for public and private sector to purchase skills from cultural industries</li> <li>• Creation of a new library in the CBD</li> <li>• Development of partnerships with the corporate sector to foster growth and enhancement of professional arts</li> </ul>



Possible Strategies	Internal and External Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the new policy and agreed strategies are reflected clearly in the operational plans for the Townsville Civic Theatre, and the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery over the next three years identifying their role in professional arts development in the city, where they partner and where they complement the role of other professional arts providers.</li> <li>• An operational plan needs also to be developed for the Library to include libraries role in the development of literature and opportunities for writers in the city.</li> <li>• The Perc Tucker Regional Gallery has identified the need for artists studios as part of its plan.</li> <li>• Make the professional arts community aware of Council's key policy areas and ways in which they could play a part in developing these areas, for example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the involvement of professional artists in neighbourhood festivals</li> <li>- the use of professional arts organisations in promoting the city</li> <li>- the training of local artists for public art opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Longer term planning needs to take place with each of the Council's main partners.</li> <li>• Council could consider moving towards longer term agreements with some professional arts organisations.</li> <li>• Establish specifications for each service sector from 2001/02.</li> <li>• Develop an arts accommodation and venue development strategy for the next 10 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional arts organisations and artist</li> <li>• Arts Queensland</li> <li>• Queensland Biennial Festival of Music</li> <li>• Australia Council</li> <li>• Other local authorities within the Region</li> <li>• Australia Foundation</li> <li>• Corporate supporters of cultural activity</li> <li>• JCU</li> <li>• TEL</li> <li>• State-wide service providers</li> <li>• NARPACA</li> </ul>

## REGIONAL CAPITAL FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Aim

*to enable Townsville City Council to fulfil its responsibility as a key, strategic agency for cultural development in North Queensland and recognise the city as the regional capital for arts and cultural development*

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional capital for all aspects of economic and social development in Northern Queensland</li> <li>• TCC's leadership role in aspects of arts and cultural development</li> <li>• Development of partnerships between Townsville arts organisations and artists in the region</li> <li>• Largest concentration of arts and cultural organisations in region</li> <li>• Current use of cultural and sporting organisations by those living in the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of recognition of the cultural strengths of the region by decision makers in the capital</li> <li>• Current condition of CBD</li> <li>• Lack of cohesiveness in relation to coordinating activity with no communications network for activity</li> <li>• Project based nature of AQ funding mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political will to support regionalism (at State and Federal levels)</li> <li>• Regional Arts Strategy</li> <li>• The need for State-wide service providers to establish a regional presence</li> <li>• Regional Arts Development Fund and involvement of Councils within the Region to progress cultural development strategies</li> </ul>

<b>Possible Strategies</b>	<b>Internal and External Partners</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate regional response to Arts Queensland on the developing regional arts strategy</li> <li>• Ensure a regional partnerships strategy becomes an element of the operational planning of Townsville funded and managed arts organisations.</li> <li>• Ensure the continued development of arts infrastructure of regional importance</li> <li>• Host specific art form related seminars and conferences on regional issues</li> <li>• Consider development of Touring Exhibition service in association with all regional gallery and the library services (similar to the Art Reach Program)</li> <li>• Adopt a leadership role in initiating dialogue on policy and practice with State and Local Government organisations</li> <li>• Sustain regular communication of initiatives and successes to State and Federal Government, and to Local Government organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government Organisations</li> <li>• Arts Queensland</li> <li>• Local and regional professional arts organisations and artists</li> <li>• State arts service providers</li> </ul>

## COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

### Aim

*to further identify and implement ways in which arts and cultural activity can contribute to community and neighbourhood development*

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department infrastructure and track record in this area</li> <li>• Employment of community development and project officers</li> <li>• Good communication with some Council departments e.g. on areas such as environment and planning</li> <li>• Partnerships created with different communities and cultures</li> <li>• Mobile Library Service</li> <li>• Neighbourhood festivals and events</li> <li>• Community based arts and cultural organisations</li> <li>• Urban renewal initiatives in cooperation with State Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent and effective communication with Council Departments</li> <li>• Lack of up to date cultural information on all neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge on some sites of cultural significance including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sites</li> <li>• Uneven spread of infrastructure and social capital throughout all neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Reliance on project orientated funding sources</li> <li>• Lack of accommodation and facilities for some community based arts organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The move towards implementing mechanisms proposed through the Integrated Planning Agreement</li> <li>• Closer communication and working partnerships with other Council Departments</li> <li>• Community support for cultural activities</li> <li>• Development of further cultural opportunities for the involvement of young people</li> <li>• Development of further opportunities for professional artsworkers in the community</li> <li>• Development of community arts organisations through partnerships with professional arts organisations</li> <li>• Opportunities for access to professional arts product in communities</li> <li>• The creation of specific hubs of focused cultural activity in the community</li> <li>• Involving communities in the planning and management of activity and providing opportunities for community response and evaluation</li> </ul>

Possible Strategies	Internal and External Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop further cultural opportunities for the involvement of young people, both through Council-delivered and independently delivered programs of activity. Build into operational plans and funding schemes.</li> <li>• Ensure through own Council promotions, opportunities for the engagement of professional artswriters in the community</li> <li>• Continue the development of partnerships, including training opportunities between professional arts organisations and community based amateur organisations</li> <li>• Ensure needs of community based arts organisations are met within the development of the Arts Accommodation strategy</li> <li>• Continue development of external partnerships to realise community based projects with other local and state government departments and the business community</li> <li>• Secure incremental improvements in community cultural knowledge and information, and develop localised development plans</li> <li>• Ensure funding programs for community cultural activity reflect the visions and aims of this plan and are communicated to community groups</li> <li>• Prepare scheme to regularly monitor and evaluate community based activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Local arts and cultural organisations</li> <li>• Local and regional artists</li> <li>• Corporate supporters of cultural activity</li> <li>• Arts Queensland</li> <li>• Centenary of Federation</li> <li>• Festival Organisers</li> </ul>

## CULTURAL TOURISM

### Aim

*to harness the benefits which arts and cultural activity can bring to Townsville's tourism offer*

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National and international markets for some events</li> <li>Role as a regional capital</li> <li>Excellent festivals program over a number of years</li> <li>Experience of major events</li> <li>Growing national awareness of cultural assets</li> <li>Climate and natural resources</li> <li>History of the city and region</li> <li>Quality of existing venues</li> <li>Good media links</li> <li>Council website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough unique local product</li> <li>Lack of partnerships with other tourism attractions</li> <li>Lack of effective communication with Townsville Enterprise (TEL)</li> <li>Lack of visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture</li> <li>Too much activity concentrated in two winter months</li> <li>No professionally run social history museum.</li> <li>Lack of infrastructure at outdoor venues, except The Strand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new Museum of Tropical Queensland</li> <li>Appointment of Cultural Officer in Tourism Queensland</li> <li>Enhancing library services for research on cultural heritage</li> <li>Re-development of inner-city areas</li> <li>Regional partnerships</li> <li>Development of Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Centre</li> <li>Planning and marketing coordination between arts, sports and recreation activities</li> </ul>

Possible Strategies	Internal and External Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with TEL and Tourism Queensland, prepare a strategic plan for the development of cultural tourism including festivals and events strategy, and addressing infrastructure needs</li> <li>Explore opportunities with all partners for co-promotions with other attractions</li> <li>Establish web-site for promotion of local activity</li> <li>Explore with Tourism Queensland opportunities for staff in cultural organisations to receive training in visitor care, marketing and communications</li> <li>Implement regular visitor research to monitor responses to arts and cultural activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism Queensland</li> <li>Townsville Enterprise Limited</li> <li>Local and regional arts and cultural organisations</li> <li>Local and regional festivals</li> <li>Arts Queensland festival program</li> <li>Local Government Organisations</li> </ul>

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

### Aim

*to recognise the special significance of the area's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to an holistic cultural life for Townsville and to work with the Elders Advisory Committee and the community as a whole on the development and promotion of cultural and artistic activity*

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Development Officer in Council</li> <li>• Size and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Townsville</li> <li>• Continued support and strength of Elders Advisory Committee</li> <li>• The increased involvement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in cultural activities such as NAIDOC week, Reconciliation week and public art consultation</li> <li>• Employment of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in public art projects, specifically projects that reflect local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture</li> <li>• The growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander courses run by James Cook University and the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE</li> <li>• The quality of artists and cultural workers graduating from these courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts group working on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and cultural workers</li> <li>• Limited or no representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists or cultural workers on local art groups</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of cultural issues and the importance and significance of the oral history tradition of recording stories for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</li> <li>• Lack of information on important cultural sites, both heritage and contemporary</li> <li>• Lack of a policy and procedure document specifically relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture</li> <li>• The lumping together of indigenous cultural heritage with European cultural heritage</li> <li>• No Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander development worker from Arts Queensland or the Australia Council for the local and surrounding region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunity to provide support for the Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Centre</li> <li>• The opportunity to strengthen links with ATSIC and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and cultural workers</li> <li>• Development of a new Gallery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories at Museum of Tropical Queensland and the possibility of linking in with the proposed Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Centre</li> <li>• The opportunity to link with ATSIC, Council and the Museum of Tropical Queensland in developing training programs and packages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, curators, trainees and cultural workers</li> <li>• The employment and training of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in arts and cultural development</li> </ul>

<b>Possible Key Strategies</b>	<b>Internal and External Partners</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through Arts Queensland, ATSIC and other relevant agencies investigate funding options to appoint an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Development Officer experienced in the arts and cultural development area</li> <li>• In consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders Advisory Committee, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Development Officer and other relevant agencies develop a protocols and procedures document in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural development</li> <li>• As a matter of priority, encourage the recording of personal, social and local area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history</li> <li>• Continue to represent Council in all consultations, negotiations and working groups in relation to the establishment of the Aboriginal and Islander Cultural Centre</li> <li>• Promote the development of partnerships that provide professional training in cultural industries for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and cultural workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elders Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community</li> <li>• ATSIC</li> <li>• OATSIA</li> <li>• Arts Queensland</li> <li>• CBD Task Force</li> </ul>



## PUBLIC ART

### Aim

*to optimise the opportunities for public art to contribute to an attractive and stimulating built environment, and to the community's appreciation and knowledge of the visual arts*

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of public art in both neighbourhood regeneration and major capital schemes</li> <li>• Support from other Council departments, and politicians</li> <li>• Public response</li> <li>• Existence and role of the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of internal infrastructure to manage projects</li> <li>• Lack of experience in this field for local artists</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge of best practice across all Council departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Government's Art Built In policy</li> <li>• Redevelopment of CBD</li> <li>• Development of Town Plan and integration with other Council planning agendas</li> <li>• Opportunities for further neighbourhood projects through community development policy</li> <li>• Potential of work opportunities for local artists</li> </ul>

Possible Key Strategies	Internal and External Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued development of overall Council policy for Public Art in line with Council's overall design policy</li> <li>• Address internal infrastructure needs, and role of the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery</li> <li>• Development of procedural issues including inter-department liaison, assessment of opportunities, process and policy of artists selection, community consultation and conservation</li> <li>• Development of protocols for involvement with State Government departments and Art Built In schemes</li> <li>• Address external infrastructure requirements including local artists training issues</li> <li>• Host regular internal and external communication sessions with the Public Art Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Council departments but in particular Planning</li> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Local and regional artists</li> <li>• CBD task force and other such groups</li> <li>• Public Art Agency</li> <li>• Other State Departments involved in capital development</li> <li>• Private developers</li> <li>• QAAA</li> <li>• Australia Council</li> </ul>

**THREATS TO EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE TOWNSVILLE REGION**

- Lack of consistent co-operation between organisations including Governments
- Failure to develop stronger partnerships with State funding agencies
- Lack of arts presence in suburban areas
- Loss of histories and culture to the community, if recording of social, personal and local area history is not made a priority
- Lack of appropriate management and working practice in public art

## ACTION PLAN

The following table summarises briefly key steps which will need to be taken to adopt, implement and review the strategies suggested in this planning document. Officers will need to allocate individual responsibilities and more precise deadlines in the light of Council decision-making cycles.

Phase	Process
Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer review of planning document, and preparation of report to Council</li> <li>• Council consideration of strategies, and future role of Council/external providers in delivery</li> <li>• Council formal adoption of planning document</li> <li>• Internal communication program</li> <li>• External communication program initiated</li> </ul>
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise approved strategies and tasks</li> <li>• Review officers' operational plans to incorporate tasks in detail for Year 1, in outline for years 2 and 3</li> <li>• Identify resource requirements and integrate with forward budget planning process</li> <li>• Support the implementation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Officer for the community</li> <li>• Initiate program of consultation and negotiation with external partners and stakeholders</li> <li>• Confirm key performance indicators for each area of strategy and other progress measures</li> <li>• Implement strategies through confirmed operational plans</li> </ul>
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish formal review procedure, e.g.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fortnightly within C&amp;CD management team</li> <li>- six-monthly to Council</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Utilise performance indicators to measure achievement and trends, and to benchmark against other local government best practice</li> <li>• Undertake continuing program of community consultation to ascertain impact of the strategies</li> <li>• Undertake six-monthly progress review with partners and stakeholders</li> <li>• On annual basis report to Council with any recommendations for change or further strategy development in the light of review procedures</li> </ul>

## **REPORT ON PERFORMING ARTS SPACE**

This report, prepared for the Council by Positive Solutions, David Fischel and Associates, considers the case for providing a dedicated performing arts venue for both professional and amateur groups in Townsville, at a smaller scale than the Townsville Civic Theatre. It is intended as a discussion paper and as an adjunct to the Cultural Plan.

### **Existing Provision**

Performing arts activities in Townsville include those directly provided by the City Council, and a wide range of activity generated by independent not for profit organisations, both amateur and professional. Council's performing arts output relates principally to the program of the Townsville Civic Theatre, whose entrepreneured promotions and hirings in 2000 included:

- entrepreneured performances of local, intrastate and interstate performing arts product;
- performances by outside hiring organisations including theatre, music, dance and opera/musical theatre events which are not Council-promoted, but facilitated by provision of the Theatre by Council.

The survey of cultural organisations undertaken by Consultants identified hundreds of performances of drama, dance and music taking place annually throughout Townsville, and occasionally elsewhere.

Issues raised in the survey relate to:

- the high level of music activity, stimulated partly by the presence of the Townsville Choral and Orchestral Society, North Queensland Opera and Music Theatre, Townsville Community Music Centre, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music and the Townsville Concert Orchestra;
- the strength of dance in Townsville as a result of the presence of Dance North and Extensions, and several dance schools for children/young people;
- the breadth of theatre activities including the work of Tropic Line, Hard Sun, Outback Players, Townsville Little Theatre and others
- the contribution of La Luna youth arts, and others based at The Lab, across both performing and visual arts

### **Current Performing Arts Facilities Provision**

The following is a brief description of the principal venues available for performing arts presentation in Townsville. Some of the cost structures may relate to the 1999/2000 budgets.

Venue	Capacity	Cost per day	Cost per week	Description
Townsville Civic Theatre	1015	\$750 (or 10% of gross box office, whichever is greater)	Pro rata, not weekly rate - rehearsal rate is \$25 per hour)	Purpose built, fully equipped proscenium arch theatre with high standard of customer services
School of Arts	200	\$250 for non commercial \$350 for commercial (plus lighting, sound, etc.)	N/A	Primarily rehearsal base for Dance North, currently theatre-style with tiered seating; proscenium arch stage (10m x 10m)
JCU Cowshed	100 max	Weekday rate is \$100 per day + \$25 per hour for duty technician. Weekly rate is \$700 + \$25 per hour for duty technician.	\$2,317 \$331/day for 5 days or more)	Theatre set up; slightly tiered; end stage configuration; flat, open performance space
JCU Sir George Kneipp Auditorium	500	Weekday rate is \$525 per day Weekend rate is \$575 per day	\$3,304 \$472/day for 5 days or more	Tiered theatre
Pimlico School Performing Arts Centre	c.200 seated	For non-profit organisations \$160/perf (full day or evening) or \$100 half day (max 4 hours). For commercial organisations \$240/perf or \$160 per half day (lighting and sound extra)	N/A	Enc stage arrangement, dressing rooms and showers, front of building - main entry, foyer, toilet facilities, kitchen servery, lighting and sound booth; some parking provided in front of building
St James Cathedral	400 max	Understood to be c.\$300 per performance		Flat-floor
Sacred Heart Cathedral	c.300			Performances usually musical; all one level seating
Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre	5,200 (main auditorium) - this is for max seating (i.e. basketball court style surround)	N/A		Dimensions of main auditorium: 50m x 30m (150m <sup>2</sup> in area); ceiling 14m to 8m high (e.g. Spirit of the Dance - using large stage in end stage arrangement which reduces seating capacity by around 1,000)

(Costs estimated in 1999/2000 financial year)

### **Notes on Performing Arts Venues**

- The Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre is not suitable for smaller scale performances.
- The Townsville Civic Theatre accommodates some smaller scale performance by curtaining off the rear seating, but this provides an inflexible performance arrangement with a large stage in end-stage format, and long rows of seats. It is difficult in this format to establish the close relationship between audience and performer which characterises successful small-scale performances.
- The church venues are suitable for some music events, but acoustics and sightlines are unsuitable for most drama and dance.
- The facility at Pimlico School is not considered to offer sufficient availability (convenient days and times) by the performing arts groups consulted, and has other constraints.
- While the School of Arts is dedicated primarily to Dance North's needs, there are limited opportunities for the Small Scale Theatre.
- The Cowshed offers too small an audience capacity for most events and being in the grounds of the University, is not particularly accessible for both residents and visitors.
- Most of the smaller venues offer poor customer and technical facilities, inadequate physical access, and no air conditioning.

### **Views of Cultural Organisations**

The views of amateur and professional performing arts organisations were solicited through individual interviews, the postal survey and two group discussions focusing on performing arts issues.

All the venues described above are being used for performance, in addition to a number of outdoor areas in public parks and other locations.

#### Townsville Civic Theatre

The only purpose-built, dedicated performing arts venue is the Townsville Civic Theatre, which is respected for its professional standards and overall quality. However, a commonly expressed view was that the Townsville Civic Theatre is too expensive for smaller-scale events, partly as a consequence of its level of overhead and the requirement to use Townsville Civic Theatre staffing. An additional constraint for smaller scale activities is the inflexibility of the stage-auditorium configuration, common to all larger scale proscenium arch theatres. In many other locations, in Australia and elsewhere, this latter problem has been addressed by providing a second, smaller space either in the same theatre complex or through the conversion of an existing building in the CBD or suburbs. The outcome is typically a flat floor studio which can be used in a variety of configurations.

### Pimlico High School

The performing arts facility at Pimlico High School offers a better physical environment than many of the other venues, and at a scale/audience capacity which is similar to the needs expressed by many cultural groups consulted. There are, however, some problems. First, that the high level of usage by the school for its own purposes and productions limits access for other groups. On days when the space can be made available for after-hours use it is only possible to initiate a bump-in from late afternoon - this is not satisfactory for resident or visiting professional groups, or indeed for most amateur companies. Effectively, there are only occasional slots that can be freed up for external users. Secondly, several organisations consulted commented on the institutional style (lack of atmosphere) and poor acoustics, which makes the venue unsuitable for music activities. Thirdly, the fixed stage and low ceiling do not provide a flexible studio space with the capacity to use tiered seating and a (simple) lighting grid. The Pimlico Arts Centre is an important addition to the school's facilities and contribution to the performing arts infrastructure of the city, but does not address the needs which have been expressed by cultural groups.

### Other Venues

While other performance venues identified are suitable for some activities, all suffer from significant limitations in their staging/technical facilities, artists' facilities and public amenities, and several are constrained by inadequate access (e.g. for disabled people), poor acoustics and inappropriate location. These observations were made consistently by a wide cross-section of performing arts organisations, and even by several non-performing arts respondents to the cultural groups survey.

### Common Needs

The most commonly articulated needs by cultural organisations were:

- a venue which has a smaller capacity than the Townsville Civic Theatre - typically an audience capacity of 200-300;
- good access for audience, and for loading/unloading;
- good sight lines for the audience;
- a flat floor to maximise flexibility, and enable productions either to be staged on the floor (with tiered seating), or on a temporary stage;
- low hiring costs to ensure the facility is affordable to a wide range of groups - this was universally mentioned as a critical success factor;
- flexible staffing arrangements, in order to keep hiring costs modest.

A number of theatre organisations indicated a preferred stage dimension of 10 metres by 8 metres. However, dance organisations would typically prefer a stage of up to 12m by 12m, and cabaret-style events would want as large and obstacle-free a flat floor area as possible.

Ideally, the dimensions of the venue would include an overall studio size of c.20m by 20m (within which a stage of up to 12m by 12m can be created), with additional footprint (at least the same floor area again as the studio-auditorium) for backstage facilities and front of house customer facilities.

### Demand Assessment

Consultation with 12 of the probable key users of a small-scale performance space identified demand for between 250-300 performances and rehearsals per year from these groups, on the assumption that the venue is affordable to them. This is a high level of demand. Even if we assume that some of this demand would not materialise, or would be lost through date/planning clashes between groups, the groups consulted were not representative of the full spectrum of performing arts activity in the city. Moreover, beyond the demand for performing arts usage, there may be opportunities to make the facility available for occasional training, small-scale conference activity and other corporate or social uses.

The following are reasonable demand assumptions on the basis of the information provided both in the group consultation and in the survey responses:

	<b>Performances per year</b>
Drama groups (including Townsville Little Theatre, Theatre Up North, Tropic Line, Outback Players and student/school use)	130
Dance groups	45
Music groups	15
Youth arts	10
Special arts projects	10
Visiting professional companies	10
Non arts usage	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>

In a financial model it is assumed that this level of activity is secured by the third year of operation of the facility, and is regarded as a “high utilisation” model, with two lower levels of utilisation also illustrated.



### Needs Identified by the Public

During the residents' survey interviewees were asked what improvements they would like to see in cultural facilities in the area. As the table below illustrates, respondents indicated that they would like to see Council improve cultural facilities in several areas, but there was a slightly greater emphasis on performing arts facilities than other types of facilities.

Cultural facilities improvements	Yes	No	No Response
Performing arts facilities	214	128	30
Visual arts facilities	190	133	49
Museum and heritage facilities	187	137	48
Libraries	195	143	34

While respondents' comments generally suggest that Council is doing "good work" in the performing arts, some respondents offered suggestions for improvement. These were mainly concerned with increasing community access to the performing arts. As one respondent summed up, "theatre events should be for everyone".

Suggestions included:

- taking theatre to the people (more outdoor performances, more community input);
- lower costs (for children, youth, groups using Townsville Civic Theatre);
- more advertising.

A particular emphasis was placed on theatre for young people. As one respondent suggested "venues, activities and positive welcoming images and message of, and for, young people".

Suggestions were also offered in relation to the facilities available. These include:

- need for more flexible facilities which are suitable for a range of uses (dance, workshops, rehearsals);
- need for a small theatre;
- continue to modernise the Townsville Civic Theatre and improve acoustics.

### Development Options

As described above, there is a consistency in the needs of cultural groups with regard to the case for a smaller scale performance space, and in their preferred capacity and format. However, that leaves a number of issues for further consideration in a more detailed feasibility study and operational plan should the finance to proceed with development of a performance facility become available. This section of the report comments on some of these further issues, including:

1. concept and function: what will the facility comprise?
2. location: how will this be selected?
3. management and operational arrangements.

### Concept and Function

- *How well fitted out:* The level of fit-out will influence both the initial capital cost of the facility, and the operational costs for hirers and owner. This will include the amount and sophistication of staging and seating systems, the lighting and sound system, and the general quality of customer and artist facilities. Generally, the more equipment is provided at the time of construction, the less expensive the operating costs will be for the hirers, because they are less likely to have to hire in additional seating, lighting or other equipment. However, a high level of fit-out increases the cost the provider of the facility both at the time of construction and subsequently through the need to provide for depreciation. A balance will need to be struck which provides more than a “shell” but which contains initial construction costs to a reasonable level.
- *Suitability for artforms:* The dimensions and preferred layout for artforms varies. The preferred configuration and stage dimensions for the majority of users may not be suitable for others, although a degree of flexibility is practical in a small venue. While height was not discussed in consultations to date, the higher the ceiling and lighting grid can be the better for physical theatre/circus and providing longer reverberation time for acoustic music (although ease of access to the lighting grid is an important consideration in minimising labour costs and optimising safety).
- *Capacity and flexibility:* While most groups expressed the need for 200-300 seats, this leaves open whether there should be a fixed or variable number of seats (through addition and removal of seating blocks), and whether a variety of configurations should be available. The range of uses of the facility will be maximised by being able to fully clear the floor space for some functions and events. To minimise labour costs this is best achieved by the installation of retractable seating. However, retractable seating only serves an end-stage arrangement and, whilst this is likely to be the most demanded format (for dance, music and most theatre presentations), it may be necessary to provide additional seating blocks to facilitate in-the-round or traverse layouts.
- *Customer facilities:* If the performance space were integrated with the existing Townsville Civic Theatre it is assumed that box office and possibly bar and catering facilities would be provided by the Townsville Civic Theatre’s management. If the facility were located separately a decision will need to be reached on the nature and standard of catering to be available to customers. If the facility were located in the CBD there would be the possibility of another local caterer providing those services or arrangements through the community organisations.
- *Accommodation and presentation:* The demand which has been most strongly expressed is for improved performance space. However, there are also rehearsal, accommodation and storage needs for local performing arts groups.

Regarding rehearsal space, the studio-auditorium would be hired out for as much time as possible when not in use for performance. However, if a high degree of performance utilisation is achieved, there will be very limited time available for rehearsal in the main space. Dependent upon budget and location it may be desirable to provide a rehearsal space as well as the main studio-auditorium with the second space being as large as the maximum likely stage area required.

Regarding accommodation, there is a question over which groups, if any, could or should be permanently resident. The potential benefit of having one or more resident groups would be:

- solving their accommodation needs
- providing day and night time presence and life in the performance facility
- enhancing security for the facility
- potentially, providing lower cost administration for the facility.

There are, however, some potential disadvantages:

- accommodated group/s may secure preferential access to performance/rehearsal slots
- groups which are currently strong artistically or managerially (and chosen for residency partly on this basis) may not be in the future.

Regarding storage it will be important to provide sufficient storage for current and perhaps incoming productions/events and current rehearsals. However, we do not believe a high priority should be placed on providing longer-term storage for sets, costumes, musical instruments (other than a piano, perhaps) as these needs can be met more economically by utilising existing building stock than making a new facility available.

#### Location: Criteria

A key issue for any new facility will be the choice of location. Criteria for selecting the best location will include:

- *Accessibility* - proximity to transport
- *Parking* - availability of space for staff and disabled parking, and public parking in the vicinity
- *Capacity* of the site to accommodate the scale of building required with adequate space for parking and potential future expansion
- *Surrounding area* - prospect of the site, character of the immediate area, proximity to restaurants/cafes, distance from residential properties
- *Prominence* - visibility will affect the impact of the facility on the public and the city
- *Planning context* - any limitations presented by planning constraints
- *Operational implications* - including running costs

Location: Options

A number of location options have been considered:

- Use Townsville Civic Theatre’s stage but change hiring/charging system
- Better use of the School of Arts and relocate Dance North’s rehearsal space
- Convert other existing CBD buildings, e.g. Bank, Old Magistrates Court Building
- New build on other CBD site
- New build as extension to Townsville Civic Theatre
- New build on greenfield site
- Integrate with JCU future development plans.

Brief comment on these is included in the table below, although it is recognised that other options may present themselves nearer the time for developing such a facility.

<b>Location Option</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Use Townsville Civic Theatre stage but change hiring/charging system	Reduce the price barrier expressed by a number of performing arts organisations, to increase hirings of the Townsville Civic Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple</li> <li>• Can be effected quickly</li> <li>• No capital expenditure</li> <li>• Increases activity return on financial investment in the Townsville Civic Theatre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not resolve inflexibility of staging arrangements and lack of intimacy</li> <li>• May reach limit of Townsville Civic Theatre’s capacity to accommodate events</li> <li>• Will increase financial commitment by Council</li> </ul>
Better use of the School of Arts and relocate Dance North’s rehearsal space	Use the existing School of Arts building as a shared performing arts facility, and provide Dance North with an alternative “home” for rehearsals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBD location</li> <li>• Owned by TCC</li> <li>• Building already has profile as small-scale facility</li> <li>• Enhances Dance North’s overall accommodation position</li> <li>• More economic to provide a rehearsal space than a new-build performance space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site may not be able to accommodate performance and rehearsal space (for other organisations than Dance North)</li> <li>• Adequate customer service/circulation space</li> <li>• No future expansion potential</li> </ul>
Convert other existing CBD building	Identify a building with low commercial potential but suitable location for arts usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to CBD redevelopment</li> <li>• Central location</li> <li>• Proximity to restaurants</li> <li>• Independent identity</li> <li>• Possible gain from character of existing building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition and redevelopment cost may be high</li> <li>• There may not be suitable adjacent car parking</li> </ul>

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New build on other CBD site	If no existing building available, consider using a CBD site for new build	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customise the building to the needs identified</li> <li>• Possibly fewer heritage constraints</li> <li>• Site can be chosen for overall suitability</li> <li>• Greater flexibility with design of new space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may not be a suitable site</li> <li>• Acquisition cost may be high</li> </ul>
New build as extension to Townsville Civic Theatre	Integrate the design with the existing Townsville Civic Theatre structure,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share box office and customer services</li> <li>• Create other potential cost efficiencies through sharing management and staffing</li> <li>• Easy access to technical and other expertise</li> <li>• Land availability</li> <li>• Car parking</li> <li>• Enhanced performing arts “precinct”</li> <li>• Enhanced return on Council’s investment in the Townsville Civic Theatre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locking into Townsville Civic Theatre structure/overheads could make the cost of running the small performance space higher than an independent operation</li> <li>• Lack of proximity to restaurants/cafes, and other entertainment facilities</li> <li>• Doesn’t assist with CBD redevelopment</li> </ul>
Integrate with JCU future development plans	Dependent upon JCU wishing to enhance its city centre presence, plan the facility as a partnership between TCC and JCU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of sharing both capital and running costs</li> <li>• Maximise utilisation of the facility</li> <li>• Create stronger links between student, amateur and professional work</li> <li>• Enhance JCU’s competitive offer and status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for clashes over availability slots</li> <li>• Complex to achieve</li> <li>• JCU’s current financial constraints</li> <li>• Negative fall-out from previous JCU withdrawal on shared cultural facilities</li> </ul>

Summary Comment on Options

Although it would avoid the need for any significant capital expenditure, the option of using the Townsville Civic Theatre’s main stage may be ruled out both on the grounds that it does not address the basic small-scale theatre environment needs which have been articulated, and that the Townsville Civic Theatre would quickly find itself at capacity usage, without meeting many of the groups’ time and space requirements.

While there may be potential to explore linkages with JCU, addressing the performance space needs through an attempt at a partnership between JCU and City Council may add a layer of complexity which hampers development.

In relation to the conversion of an existing building in the CBD, two possibilities have been mentioned. The first would be to adapt the Old Museum Building (currently part-used as Council offices). The second would be to explore the use of an existing building in the CBD.

Undoubtedly, there will be other potential locations to consider. More detailed analysis of the potential locations against each of the criteria may be undertaken following an initial short-listing of location options.

#### Location: Views of the Public

The residents' survey mentioned above canvassed views on the most appropriate location for a new small-scale performance space. While a range of suggestions emerged in relation to the potential location of a new small venue, there are two main proposals which emerged from this open question.

There is strong interest in the new small theatre being built closer to the population centre of Townsville (currently estimated as lying between the suburban boundaries of Aitkenvale, Vincent and Heatley). Suggestions include Aitkenvale, the Lakes, and suburbs such as Douglas.

There is also fairly strong support for the new small theatre being located close to the City centre, including options such as the Mall environment. This facility would enhance the CBD redevelopment and provide opportunities for commercial enterprise in the supply of support infrastructure with food and drinks.

#### **Options for Location of Small Theatre**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Inner City	
- Central Business District	62%
- Near Townsville Civic Theatre	27%
- The Strand	11%

The provision or availability of parking emerged as an important issue for respondents in the selection of a site.

#### Management and Operational Issues

##### Ownership

The proposed facility could remain in the ownership of City Council or be owned by a Trust/non-profit established for the development. The principal reason to consider the latter alternative would be if this accesses funding and partnership opportunities. For example, if funding were to be sought from the private sector or public the project would need to have an identity separated from Council. Equally, funding from State Government might be secured at a higher level/proportion if the project were independent. Although there are now precedents within the State for the Queensland

State Government to provide funding beyond the 20% capital subsidy for Local Government initiatives in cultural development.

### Operation

There are a number of possibilities for operational arrangements for the facility. The principal options are:

1. Direct management by Townsville City Council, as part of the Townsville Civic Theatre operation
2. Management by an existing independent non-profit organisation
3. Management by a new non-profit organisation, established for the purpose.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Possible Advantages</b>	<b>Possible Disadvantages</b>
Direct management by Townsville City Council, as part of the Townsville Civic Theatre operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economies of scale</li> <li>• Access to existing staff expertise</li> <li>• Integration of equipment/facilities</li> <li>• Financial stability, avoidance of cashflow problems</li> <li>• Avoidance of programming clashes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher unit staffing and operational costs *</li> <li>• Reduced access to external sources of funding</li> <li>• Lack of engagement of the key users in the planning and operation processes</li> <li>• Constrain independent style and identity</li> </ul>
Management by an existing independent non-profit organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economies of scale</li> <li>• Low staffing costs</li> <li>• Access to external funding sources</li> <li>• Resolve an existing organisation's accommodation problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monopolisation of space and resources by a single constituency</li> <li>• May lack the necessary spread of expertise (technical, administrative, programming, marketing)</li> <li>• Risk of overloading a small, modestly resourced organisation</li> <li>• Risk of diverting an existing organisation from its core business</li> <li>• Vulnerable to cashflow/ financial difficulties which the organisation as a whole may experience</li> </ul>
Management by a new non-profit organisation, established for the purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to select relevant expertise at both staff and Committee level</li> <li>• Focus solely on success of the new facility, not on other organisational priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable to cashflow difficulties</li> <li>• Competition with Townsville Civic Theatre for some activities</li> <li>• Constraints on level of catering and other customer</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low unit staffing costs</li> <li>• Neutrality in relation to all users</li> <li>• Access to external funding sources</li> </ul>	services which will be practical
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\* Terms and conditions for staff in the public sector being more generous than in the not for profit sector

### Summary Comment on Management Options

A key difficulty with seeking to pass operational management to an existing non-profit organisation is that such a body will not be seen as neutral, meeting the needs of the various cultural organisations in an even-handed manner. In the event that it were determined to bring the facility within the management structure of the Townsville Civic Theatre, consideration would need to be given to the staffing structures and levels, and line management arrangements. There may be opportunities for contractual arrangements as is now occurring in other Councils in Queensland.

### **Finance**

This section provides an initial indication of the possible construction and running costs for a small-scale performing arts facility.

#### Construction Cost Parameters

There are neither initial plans nor a specific brief for the proposed facility at this early stage of feasibility assessment. Any estimate of costs must be treated, therefore, with great caution. However, it may be helpful to provide some parameters, based on known construction costs of performing arts facilities elsewhere in the recent past.

Allowing for main performance space, ancillary rehearsal space, customer services, and back-stage facilities, it is reasonable to assume that the scale of facility will be in the range 800m<sup>2</sup> to 1200m<sup>2</sup>. The footprint may be less than this, as backstage or customer facilities could be on more than one level.

Construction and fit-out costs at other locations in Australia for performing arts facilities under development recently have ranged from \$2500-\$3000 per square metre. Overall costs, excluding land acquisition, might look as follows:

Scale of Facility	Cost per m <sup>2</sup>	
	2500m <sup>2</sup>	3000m <sup>2</sup>
800m <sup>2</sup>	\$2,000,000	\$2,400,000
1000m <sup>2</sup>	\$2,500,000	\$3,000,000
1200m <sup>2</sup>	\$3,000,000	\$3,600,000



## Operating Costs

### *Income Assumptions*

The only income stream which has been assumed is rental/hiring income. Although there may be opportunities for catering and other ancillary income, this is likely to be very modest, given the scale of the facility, and will be affected by the location and choice of management arrangements.

To illustrate typical hiring charges for small-scale performance spaces elsewhere we have reviewed a number of existing facilities. The following table summarises these.

**Capacity and Costs at Small-Scale Theatre Spaces  
in Queensland and Northern Territory**

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Daily Hire</b>	<b>Weekly Hire</b>
Pimlico School Performing Arts Centre	Townsville	c.200	\$240	N/A
School of Arts	Townsville	130	\$250-\$350 (not including lighting, sound, etc.)	N/A
Merrivale St Studio	Brisbane	c.200		\$2000
La Boite	Brisbane	200		\$1500-\$2500
Princess Theatre	Brisbane	140-160		\$1000-\$1500
Powerhouse	Brisbane	200	\$350	\$1750
Mackay Entertainment Centre	Mackay	The Foyer - up to 400 The Space - up to 110 (theatrette style)	The Foyer -\$250 (+ costs) The Space - \$200 (neg) plus air con and duty tech	N/A
Darwin Entertainment Centre	Darwin	Studio - up to 298 Exhibition Gallery - around 100	Studio - for 1 perf (8 hrs) from \$315 Exhibition Gallery - \$136 per day (incl electricity and air con)	N/A

Hiring rates for these venues vary, but within fairly narrow parameters. Typically, a single night's hire for these c.200 seat venues is in the order of \$250-\$350, and a week's hire in the range \$1500-\$2000. In many cases these hire rates do not include the costs of technical equipment, front of house staff, box office services, seating or other necessary infrastructure. The overall costs to the hirer may be significantly higher than the levels indicated. The average hiring charges for venues up to 500 seats across Australia are c.\$550 per day or \$3500 per week. This is for venues which are members of the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association.

Most of the facilities listed above are provided as an adjunct to a larger facility or complex. Staff and other operational costs are amortised across the whole facility and it is difficult to ascertain the proportion of cost which is attributable to the small-scale space.

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The only stand-alone, dedicated facility in the table above is the Princess Theatre in Brisbane, which is an unfunded facility operating on a commercial basis. It is, however, very dilapidated, and has to be technically equipped and staffed by the company hiring the venue. The real cost of hiring is considered to be between two and three times the stated weekly rental cost. From the owner/operator perspective costs are contained by offering a shell only.

Consultation to date with Townsville performing arts organisations suggests that costs will have to be kept well below the average for other venues in Queensland, and that any box office, front of house and technical services will need to be additional to the hire fee. In the financial model prepared, we have illustrated the effect of hire charges at \$120, \$160 and \$200 per day.

In addition to varying the cost of hiring, our financial model also varies the level of utilisation. At each rate of hiring we provide two models, one of which assumes that a rise in daily rate from \$120 to \$160 (or from \$160 to \$200) would reduce demand for hirings by 10%, the other by 20% (i.e. assumes greater price elasticity of demand). The models prepared, therefore, include:

Low hire charge	10% elasticity	20% elasticity
Medium hire charge	10% elasticity	20% elasticity
Top hire charge	10% elasticity	20% elasticity

#### *Expenditure Assumptions*

Bearing in mind the need to keep operating costs as low as possible, it has been assumed that the facility would not entrepreneur its own program, and would re-charge any box office services, front of house ushers or back-stage casuals.

Premises costs are based on the Property Council of Australia's estimates, varied by comparison with such costs at existing performing arts centres in Queensland, pro rated for the scale of venue. Administration costs are based on management accounts at a number of venues, again pro rated for the scale of operation. No depreciation allowance for the building has been included (depreciated over, say, 40 years this would result in an annual write-down of c.\$60,000 - \$70,000). The financial model assumes:

- one full-time Facility Manager
- one part-time (50%) Technical Officer
- one part-time (25%) Front of House/Customer Services Officer

The following summarises income and expenditure on the basis of a hiring charge of \$160 per day, and the above assumptions:

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
Staffing	84,713	Theatre hires	30,912
Premises and administration	59,214	Catering/bars	0
Program entrepreneuring	0	Booking fees	0
Marketing	0	Re-charges/contras	26,082
Re-charges/contras	26,082	Sponsorship/development	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>170,009</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>56,994</b>
<b>Subsidy requirement: \$113,015</b>			

In the range of financial variances we have appended, the subsidy requirement ranges from c.\$105,000 to \$130,000 per year. Given the modest difference which this represents to Council, it would appear to make sense to contain hiring charges for local groups to as low a level as possible, to maximise utilisation. It is also evident, that as high as utilisation might become for the facility, the fixed costs of maintaining basic professional staffing and meeting premises costs will always require a minimum subsidy commitment of over \$100,000. If programming and marketing activity were to take place, this would increase the subsidy requirement.

### **Critical Success Factors**

The following are key factors which will influence the success of a new small-scale performing arts space:

- Additional demand research immediately prior to commitment of design and construction resources. (It is assumed that the facility might not proceed in the short term, and that local circumstances could alter prior to the project's advancement.)
- Careful consideration of the uses to which Council can put the new venue, both for arts promotions and other activities.
- An audience capacity of 200-300.
- A flat floor to maximise flexibility, and enable productions either to be staged on the floor (with tiered seating), or on a temporary stage.
- Good access for audience.
- Ease of access for loading/unloading.
- Good sight lines for the audience.
- Low hiring costs to ensure the facility is affordable to a wide range of groups
- Council commitment to continuing subsidy.
- Flexible staffing arrangements.
- Convenient location.
- Adequate adjacent parking.
- Continuing consultation with potential hirers during the design and development phase, to ensure that the facility matches their requirements as closely as possible.

## **PERFORMING ARTS FACILITY SUMMARY**

There are three broad options for Council to consider in addressing the expressed need for enhancing access to performance facilities for local arts groups:

1. Build a new facility at a location to be determined.
2. Adapt an existing facility, probably within the CBD.
3. Increase utilisation of the Townsville Civic Theatre by lowering hire charges.

This section of the report has presented evidence of the demand for small-scale performing arts space, expressed strongly by arts organisations in Townsville, and supported by the public's interest in improved performing arts infrastructure in the City.

It has been indicated that a newly constructed facility is likely to cost between \$2,000,000 and \$3,600,000. It is possible that conversion of an existing building could secure a cheaper solution, dependent upon the acquisition cost for the building. It may be that a subsidy of c.\$125,000-\$150,000 per year is likely to be required to operate the facility with minimum staffing and at a rental cost which ensures a high level of utilisation. If the facility were entrepreneuring its own program this would increase the subsidy requirement.

Prior to investing further in consultation or detailed planning a commitment in principle is needed to securing or providing the construction costs and the continuing subsidy requirement (subject to more detailed design and costings, and further operational planning). Following such a commitment in principle, the following steps would need to take place:

- Identification and evaluation of location options.
- In consultation with arts organisations, CBD Task Force and other stakeholders, selection of preferred location.
- Selection of design team (e.g. architects, theatre consultants, acousticians, public art adviser)
- Scheme design preparation and detailed costings.
- Determination of management arrangements.
- In further consultation with arts organisations and Council staff, preparation of a business plan.
- Confirmation of funding for construction from Council and other sources.
- Selection of construction firm.
- Recruitment of Facility Manager.
- Construction.
- Marketing of facility.