



Mt Barker and District Residents'
Association Inc.

For the Community

11/09/08

Draft

CULTURE AND ARTS POLICY
of the
DISTRICT COUNCIL OF MOUNT BARKER

as approved by a meeting in the SextonGlover offices, 40 Adelaide Road Mount Barker on 19th August, 2008.

Introduction

Culture may be defined as the sum of all the values and activities of a community. Thus, a community's culture incorporates its political, ethical, entertainment, commercial, sporting and recreational life. But, for the purposes of this policy (and to distinguish it from the Sport and Recreation policy), culture is taken to cover all the District's aesthetic and arts activities and facilities. It is a wider social construct than the *arts* as they may be narrowly defined, but it includes them.

Culture and arts constitute a significant aspect of the first half of the Council's motto: 'Lifestyle at heart; business in mind'. As the Gross National Happiness statement on Wikipedia has it: 'true development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occur side by side'.

There is really no need to justify culture and the arts: they are inherent in every human community that has ever existed and they have always been supported by political power and finance, local as well as national. In fact, the District already has its culture - which Council has often, in an unplanned and uncoordinated way, supported. And the arts are practised, and appreciated, by many members of the community. But, many of those who have moved into the District in recent years wish to see its culture broadened beyond sport and commercialised popular entertainment; thus, the community is ready for richer cultural development.

This policy is derived from the District's *Community Strategic Plan, Strategic Directions 2008-2018*, Goal Area 1 - People and Communities, which aims at strategies like 'Strengthening identity and culture through celebrations, festivals and events', 'Collaborating with communities and individuals to support and value creative endeavours' and 'Recognising and supporting art and artistic development'. It also draws

its status from the third Pillar of the Plan: 'Respecting and promoting culture and heritage.'

It informs all of Council's decisions and plans, for it has relevance to them all.

Principles

In the 21st century, culture should never be narrowly defined. Thus, the policy provides equal opportunities for all - including (and not limited to) popular culture as well as the traditional arts, the culture of youth as well as of the mature and the aged, and the disabled. Thus, provisions for culture and the arts are integrated into the District's Strategic and Annual plans.

The policy promotes active participation above passive entertainment. However, any involvement with commercialised culture must assure that true aesthetic, educational and cultural values are privileged.

It recognises the role of culture and the arts in developing community cohesion. This is particularly relevant currently in relation to the culture of our youth.

A key application is to plan - and promote the development of - the 'product' for Council's Cultural Tourism Officer to 'sell'.

Objectives

1. To encourage and support local people's participation in creative activities both as practitioners and as audience. These activities may be generated by local people - both professional and non-professional (preferably in collaboration with professionals) - or sponsored from outside the District.

They should aim to be inclusive of groups that have not hitherto been associated with such cultural activities.

2. To provide resources and funding necessary for the achievement of these objectives.

This includes obtaining grants and other funding and assistance from government agencies and private sponsors as well as advising Council on the provision in every year's budget for culture and arts purposes.

It may also include sponsoring local artists for exhibitions and performances outside the District.

3. To incorporate the various *volunteer groups* that are currently involved in local culture.

4. To develop an integrated and professionally-executed public art programme (such as sculptures and murals in public places) for the entire District. This includes the design of such things as the streetscape, public signage, public parks and gardens and the District's heritage.

5. To preserve and build upon **existing events**:

Jazz and Heritage Fest, Messiah performance, SALA, the Fringe Festival, National Family History Week, Heysen Week, the Heysen Prize, the Christmas Pageant, Steam Ranger 'Steam Up', the Fire Festival, Tour Down-under, Classic Adelaide, Power of the Past, the annual shows, Country Arts touring exhibitions and events etc.

6. To preserve and develop **existing culture and arts venues**:

Mount Barker Institute, Hahndorf Academy, Mount Barker Library, Hahndorf Institute, Littlehampton Peace Hall, Cornerstone College hall (Imbarendi), Duck Flat Garden, Mount Barker Linear Trail, Recreation Centre and show-grounds, Von Doussa Clubhouse, the Mount Barker Family House, Heysen *The Cedars*, Prospect Hill Museum etc

This includes recognition and preservation of the District's visual heritage.

7. To recognise and assist the development of **existing arts/culture groups**, such as the Town Band, the Artist's Voice, Artvan, Arts Excentrix, Adelaide Hills Motor Restorers Club, the National Trust, the Show Society, the Caledonian Society, Steam Ranger, Mount Barker and Hahndorf business groups, U3A, and TAFE and school cultural and arts programmes.

8. To consider the **establishment of** new culture and arts facilities and events, such as an art gallery, an historical museum (various local collections, including that of the Motor Restorers, could be incorporated), a concert hall, a community workshop, youth and aged events and public art.

9. To consider means of recognizing and respecting **indigenous culture** and the cultures of other **minority groups**.

10. To disseminate information about, and education in, culture and the arts to the whole community.

Culture and Arts Advisory Group (CAAAG)

The Culture and Arts Advisory Group is a permanent formal advisory committee of Council established under Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Its purpose and function is to champion, advocate and support culture and the arts and to initiate, drive and advocate Council's engagement with culture and the arts in the District. It is intended to enable a broad range of initiatives to be implemented rather than to impose unnecessary restrictions.

It is comprised of members of the public and elected members with expertise in, considerable interest in, or knowledge of the various art forms - visual arts and design, music, the theatre arts, literature, youth and indigenous and multicultural cultures - and the encouragement of public literacy and education in aesthetic matters.

Public members are appointed for a period of two years, which may be extended individually. They are appointed from responses to an advertisement by an assessment

committee appointed from time to time by the Council for the purpose of advising it on appointments to the CAAAG.

It reports to the whole Council through a responsible officer.

It meets monthly on the third Monday in the month.

It has the power to divide into appropriate sub-committees and to co-opt other suitably-qualified members of the public.

ADDENDUM: Possible Tasks for the CAAAG

1. Advise Council on culture and arts projects, whether they be initiated by Council staff, benefactors, developers or other members of the public.
2. Suggest to Council culture and art projects for implementation, such as
 - commissioning a new logo for the District, including its colours
 - the establishment of a Community Shed
 - the purchase of works of visual art for Council to lease out to commercial venues
 - reviving the initiatives of the 2004 Worth Plan
 - turning Keith Stephenson Park into a Sculpture park
3. As administrative personnel changes, maintain policy continuity or ensure that changes that do occur respect established principles and values.
4. Secure grants for funding culture and arts projects on behalf of Council.
5. Devise Council guidelines for things like
 - selecting members for the CAAAG and for its sub-committees
 - public art, festivals and performances
 - choosing panels of judges for public art projects etc
 - official signage and graphics
 - mobile street signs
 - standards of commercial signage
 - handling graffiti
6. Ensure the preservation of existing culture and arts venues
7. Advise council on contracts for art works and performances
8. Encourage and support continuation of culture and arts events we currently have, such as the various annual shows, 'The Power of the Past', the Heysen Festival, the Heysen Prize, the Heritage and Jazz Festival, the Highland Gathering and Meadows Country Fair