

The logo is a dark orange teardrop shape with a white outline, containing the word "PENRITH" in white capital letters.

PENRITH

**MAYORAL ARTS
& CULTURE SUMMIT**
September 2015

**PENRITH
CITY COUNCIL**

penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

Message from **THE MAYOR**



The Penrith Mayoral Arts and Culture Summit was held at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre on the evening of 1 September 2015.

Initiated by the former Mayor of Penrith Councillor Ross Fowler OAM and supported by Blue Mountains City Council and Hawkesbury Council, the Summit was attended by over 100 artists, creative entrepreneurs, educators, arts and cultural groups, and key stakeholders to identify the opportunities and priorities to grow the arts and culture sector in our region.

Penrith City and our neighbouring cities of Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury are wonderful places to live, work, socialise and create. By building a strong and vibrant arts and cultural economy we can attract talented people to live, work and invest in our area.

A strong and vibrant cultural community requires a whole of region approach and the Summit is a major step in encouraging a collaborative approach from individuals, groups and organisations.

This report provides an overview of the Summit proceedings and the main priorities that emerged from the discussions in the workshop groups. It is these priorities that are the basis of a campaign for action including ensuring that Penrith and our region receive a fairer share of federal and state arts and culture program and infrastructure funding.

I commend you to endorse the priorities identified in the report and support Penrith Council in achieving the outcomes we want for our region.



Karen McKeown

COUNCILLOR KAREN MCKEOWN
MAYOR PENRITH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	5
Background.....	6
The Summit.....	8
STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES	9
PRIORITIES TO GROW ARTS AND CULTURE	10
Agenda for Action.....	15



Executive SUMMARY

This Report is the outcome of the Mayoral Arts and Culture Summit organised by Penrith City Council at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre on 1 September 2015. The key aim of the Summit was to provide the arts and cultural sector with an opportunity to identify their priorities for the growth of arts and culture in Penrith and the region, and contribute to an agenda for further action by Council and other stakeholders. The long term goal of the Summit is to contribute to a more vibrant and sustainable arts and cultural sector in Penrith City and Outer Western Sydney.

The Summit brought together over 100 artists, creative entrepreneurs, educators, arts and cultural groups, and key stakeholders from across Penrith, the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury Local Government Areas.

The welcome speech from former Penrith Council Mayor, Councillor Ross Fowler OAM, highlighted some of the significant inequities in the funding of arts and culture between central Sydney and our region.

A broader context for the Summit was provided by Craig Butler, Assistant General Manager, highlighting how arts, culture and creative entrepreneurs can contribute to more dynamic and sustainable cities.

Dr Paula Abood, facilitator of the Summit, provided an overview of the agenda, and highlighted that this was the first occasion that local government had initiated a forum such as this to address inequities in arts and culture funding.

The small group process formed the core of the Summit. From these groups a number of common priorities emerged which are summarised later in the report.

As indicated at the Summit all participants will receive the report from the 2015 Mayoral Arts and Culture Summit.

Participants will also be provided with the opportunity to sign up to the main priorities documented in the small workshop groups. Signing up to the broad priorities will enable Penrith Council to advocate more effectively on behalf of the region for greater equity in the allocation of arts funding by the Commonwealth and State governments, while at the same time providing guidance for further advocacy by Council and other organisations and artists that attended the Summit.

BACKGROUND

Article 27 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* affirms that everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts. The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is a legal and policy framework that helps foster or create environments in which artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and community members can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services and activities. To reach this goal, the Convention calls on governments to introduce measures to nurture creativity, to provide opportunities for creators to participate in domestic and international marketplaces and to ensure that artistic works are accessible to a larger public. The Mayoral Arts and Culture Summit puts into action a process that facilitates movement towards achieving these human rights goals.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions promotes respect and dialogue between cultures and recognises the importance of protecting the diversity of cultural expressions that exist around the world. On 23 September 2009 the Federal Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts announced that Australia had become a party to the Convention.

Jon Hawkes <http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/downloads/FourthPillarcomplete.pdf>

This 2015 report was prepared by Deloitte Access Economics on behalf of the NSW Business Chamber, Liverpool City Council, Parramatta City Council and Penrith City Council to present the case for greater investment in the Cultural Arts in Western Sydney.

Jon Hawkes, author of *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability*, describes culture as the framework for the distinctive way of life of communities. He says it is both 'the inherent values and the means and the results of social expression'. Culture is dynamic and constantly changing; and it embodies the diversity of identities, communities and experiences – it is expressive of who we are. Most of all, culture articulates the future we imagine. Cultural vitality is a key indicator of the quality of life in a region's diverse communities. Cultural development fosters innovation, engages people's creativity, and promotes individual and community well-being. Participation in the arts, access to opportunities for creative expression, and engagement with cultural events that represent and reflect the distinctive characteristics of the region are key to fostering dynamic and sustainable cultural and creative sectors.

The 2015 Deloitte Access Economics Report *Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy: a Key to Sydney's Success* presents a compelling case for greater investment in Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy. The Report affirms that Western Sydney 'is a microcosm of Australian culture, with the art created in the region reflecting the nation's diversity, aspirations, individuality and uniqueness'. The Report finds that "this art continues to break new ground, sets new standards, and rivals in excellence art created elsewhere in Australia, and overseas". The Report also found that in 2011 Western Sydney households spent an aggregate of \$232 million directly at museums, art galleries, live theatre, music concerts and on cultural fees and charges; by 2021 this is expected to grow to \$444 million.

A key finding of the Deloitte Report confirmed that while Western Sydney represents 1 in 10 Australians, the region attracts only 1% of Commonwealth arts program funding, and 5.5 % of NSW arts, heritage and events funding. The Report recognises that the cultural and creative economy is already one of the most valuable sectors of the Australian economy - and indeed a large part of that of Western Sydney.

Further to this, in February 2015, the NSW Premier, the Hon Mike Baird MP and the Hon Troy Grant MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts launched a new arts funding package for Western Sydney in Parramatta. A number of the commitments focused on Parramatta including \$10 million to develop a business case to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. Only an additional \$7.5 million over four years was allocated to support artists and organisations across the remainder of Greater Western Sydney.

Against this background, the Mayoral Arts and Culture Summit was organised to provide artists, creatives, educators and cultural organisations and groups in the Penrith, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury LGAs with the opportunity to contribute their views on arts and culture priorities in the region.

This report provides an overview of the strengths and opportunities identified by Summit participants, and details the priorities for action in the short and medium term. The Report will be distributed to all participants, with Penrith City Council leading a campaign to achieve greater fairness and equity in the allocation of arts and cultural program and infrastructure funding for Penrith and the region. The Mayoral Arts and Culture Summit is thus framed in a context of Council's aspirations for the City and region. Summit participants and other stakeholders are encouraged to endorse the priorities of the report.





The SUMMIT

The key aim of the Summit was to provide the arts and cultural sector with an opportunity to identify their priorities for the growth of arts and culture in Penrith and the region, and contribute to an agenda for further action by Council and other stakeholders. The long term goal of the Summit is to contribute to a more vibrant and sustainable arts and cultural sector in Penrith City and Outer Western Sydney.

The Summit brought together over 100 artists, creative entrepreneurs, educators, arts and cultural groups, and key stakeholders from across Penrith, the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury Local Government Areas.

The methodology of the Summit was modelled on participatory action research, drawing on the knowledge and cultural capital of artists and cultural workers in the region. Of the participants at the Summit 55 respondents completed an evaluation. Of that sample, 53% identified as undertaking most of their creative work and/or activities in the Penrith LGA, 33% from the Blue Mountains LGA, 6% from Hawkesbury LGA, and 7% from Western Sydney. 75% of respondents identified the opportunity to participate in small group discussions as excellent, with 24%.

The welcome speech of Penrith Council's former Mayor, Councillor Ross Fowler OAM, highlighted some of the significant inequities in the funding of arts and culture between central Sydney and our region.

A broader context for the Summit was provided by Craig Butler, Assistant General Manager, highlighting how arts, culture and creative entrepreneurs can contribute to more dynamic and sustainable cities.

Dr Paula Abood, facilitator of the Summit, provided an overview of the agenda, and highlighted that this was the first occasion that local government had initiated a forum such as this to address inequities in arts and culture funding.

The small group process formed the cores of the Summit. From these groups a number of common priorities emerged which are summarised later in the report.

Each participant was allocated to a group with a facilitator and scribe to ensure that the main ideas, aspirations and priorities shared in the groups were documented for inclusion in the final report. There were a total of twelve groups and the following five questions were discussed by each group:

1. What are the existing strengths of Penrith City and region?
2. What opportunities exist to further develop the arts and culture sector in Penrith and the region?
3. What is your number one priority for the development of the arts and culture sector in Penrith and the region?
4. As a group are you able to agree on two priorities?
5. What can you contribute to the development for a strong and vital arts and culture sector in Penrith and the region?

The following sections of this report summarise the most common responses to these questions from the 12 small groups.



STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Participants across all 12 groups identified a range of strengths and opportunities in Penrith and the region.

Strengths

- The cultural and social infrastructure of the region - this includes not only the major cultural facilities (examples given were The Joan and Gallery and the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre), but the small, medium and the portable infrastructure that individual and independent artists have built up across the region; educational facilities including schools, TAFE and Western Sydney University; libraries and local councils; community organisations and not-for-profit groups.
- Cultural and social diversity of the region - Aboriginal communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, young people, people with disabilities, GLBTQ communities, elders and seniors (cultural memory), young families, communities of artists and cultural groups, new and emerging communities, creative professionals.
- The significance of the bio-diversity of the region - the inland water ecosystems, the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park, the Cumberland Plain, small parks and green spaces.
- Concentration of artists in the region - representation across all art forms, spanning contemporary, traditional, cross-art, hybrid, digital; across all ages and span of career - emerging, mid-career and established; community-based; socially engaged practitioners.
- 'Our stories are our strength' - not marginal or 'out west'; but stories that reflect the aspirations and experiences of the people of the region; 'we connect as a community'; a 'strong sense of community' was a common thread.

Opportunities

- Existing infrastructure - making better use of the existing cultural facilities; making facilities more affordable and accessible to artists and cultural groups; identifying empty or under-utilised spaces to convert into creative spaces and hubs for artists and cultural groups.
- Strategic partnerships - between the region's local councils; between Western Sydney University, TAFE and the business sector to build resources, capital investment and audience opportunities; between community organisations and not-for-profits; between artists; and collaborations between the above listed organisations.
- Cross-cultural work – engaging with Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse and other communities experiencing exclusion and disadvantage; providing access to mainstream cultural infrastructure.
- The nexus between the natural environment and the creative arts– highlighting the unique features of the region and the potential for cultural tourism.
- The role of arts and cultural development in the stewardship of place and education on ecologically sustainable development – contributing to a heightened importance of the natural environment including waterways.
- Digital and new media technologies - digital hubs; enhance audience reach; devise digital cultural map of region to capture assets and identify gaps; collaboration with the private sector.
- Develop creative installations and public art – linked and integrated within public spaces contributing to the vibrancy of places.
- Develop cultural events including festivals that are grounded in place – engage existing residents, attract new communities, artists, creatives and visitors, integrating the visions of artists and the community.
- Build creative skills - potential of young people as future artists in both formal and non-formal education settings; mid-career and established artists mentoring emerging artists; embedding the value of arts in the next generation.
- Encourage cultural ambassadors for the region – support cultural networking, tourism, and sustainability.
- Participants from Blue Mountains, the Hawkesbury and Penrith identified a lack of creative spaces 'from the bottom up' – artist's studios, pop-up spaces, and creative hubs/incubators; need more cultural infrastructure that is accessible and affordable.

PRIORITIES TO GROW ARTS AND CULTURE

One of the main objectives of the Summit was to provide an opportunity for artists, educators, creatives and cultural organisations and groups to express their priorities for the growth of arts and culture in Penrith and the region.

The following priorities are ranked in order of the number of times they were raised across the twelve groups. In addition after each priority there are listed strategies that can contribute to achieving the priority. These strategies also emerged from the discussions.

Priority 1

Advocate for equity in arts and cultural development funding at both state and commonwealth levels.

Equity is an underpinning principle of a cultural democracy. Equitable access to a diversified range of arts and cultural development activities across the region and access to the means of expressions and dissemination constitute important elements for enhancing cultural and creative diversity and enabling sustainability. An action-based campaign will achieve greater fairness and equity in funding for Penrith and the region.

STRATEGIES

- Establish a peak advocacy body that represents individual and independent artists, all art forms, organisations of all sizes including the small to medium, and the diversity of arts and cultural groups across the region; using the evidence-based research of the Deloitte Report and the stories of the region's artists, organisations, groups and communities as a tool to leverage more resources, infrastructure and funding to the region.

The brief of the advocacy body could include:

- Producing evidence-based research and data to facilitate a campaign to achieve equity across the region, with particular attention to art forms and regions (Penrith, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury) that are under-resourced and under-represented
- Identifying strategic investment opportunities
- Promoting a regional identity
- Educating and promoting the value of the arts across the region's diverse communities, sectors and

constituencies

- Brokering strategic alliances and partnerships
- Researching how the arts can be integrated into new commercial and residential development projects in the region.
- Identify and fund a specific position (supported and resourced by the region's councils, businesses, cultural and educational sectors) with a brief to lobby the State and Commonwealth for equity in arts and cultural development funding.

Priority 2

Establish and resource accessible creative hubs/incubators that support artists to grow their practice and generate professional opportunities for emerging, mid-career and established artists.

STRATEGIES

- Establish and resource multi-purpose spaces for creative industries hubs/incubators with studios, rehearsal spaces, gallery and creative retail outlets, with state of the art equipment to create, produce and exhibit.
- Attract and support artists, cultural groups and arts-related activities through an expanded range of funding programs across the region including a fellowship for the region, artist-in-residence initiatives, regional, national and international, artists exchange and mentoring initiatives.
- Support jobs and employment opportunities for artists including nurturing relationships between artists, designers, cultural organisations, health industry and the private business sector to increase employment.
- Research and resource artist-in-residence programs across public, private and community sectors (including at WSU, TAFE, schools, libraries and corporate sites).
- Councils to work with the business sectors to broker partnerships and sponsorship.
- Foster the development of local content, promoting and link the regions artists to businesses, producers and production houses.
- Build an environment supportive of innovation and creativity including supporting artists and artist work spaces as anchors around which to build creative industry clusters.



Priority 3

Establish and resource accessible artist-run pop-ups across the region, nurturing a culture of art in everyday local spaces.

STRATEGIES

- Identify local council spaces and shop fronts across the region and develop a program of pop-ups to increase the number of artists who have access to work spaces.
- Nurture artist enterprises including undertaking research on viable models and provide seed funding/micro-financing for start-ups.
- Cluster arts organisations and creative pop-ups spaces as retail anchors and activity generators to attract and support other enterprises.

Priority 4

Promote arts and culture to diverse communities by expanding and resourcing community cultural engagement programs and initiatives to maximise participation and access, fostering social inclusion and strengthening communities.

STRATEGIES

- Provide artists with professional development training to work with communities in creative contexts
- Expand funding in community cultural programs in local councils to generate increased participation in community-based arts and cultural practices.
- Promote interaction in public spaces by engaging artists in community collective cultural experiences through funded local initiatives and place making programs.
- Resource Aboriginal artists and cultural workers to promote and protect heritage and knowledge systems and its positive contribution to sustainable development; foster engagement with place and story; develop cultural programs including walks and open galleries.
- Develop partnerships with schools, colleges and universities: including artist-in-residency programs to engage and nurture children and young people's creativity; 'We need to harness [young people's high levels of participation in the arts] before [they] leave the area or give up'; specific focus on children's engagement and creative education.

Priority 5

Establish customised professional development and mentoring programs for emerging, mid-career and established artists in the region to develop their practice, and enhance access to employment opportunities.

STRATEGIES

- Undertake skills audit of the region's artists to identify professional development needs and employment pathways.
- Provide promotion and marketing support to artists and cultural producers to develop branding and capacity to build audience, event and/or outputs.
- Build grant writing skills to leverage funding from a range of sources
- Provide professional development opportunities to foster the creation of local content
- Research residency opportunities which provide a unique opportunity for artists to effectively immerse themselves in new arts contexts and markets, and build knowledge, networks and partnerships that support creative activity.
- Establish a program of residencies in creative spaces that enable the artistic development of individual artists and groups.
- Research and initiate a mentoring program for young and emerging artists.
- Provide support and mentoring opportunities to build sustainable enterprises and micro-businesses.

Priority 6

Develop digital multimedia capacities and hubs/incubators to engage wider audiences and reach, enhancing global opportunities for the region's artists, designers and creatives.

STRATEGY

- Establish and resource digital multimedia hubs/incubators to enhance artist capacities, contemporary arts practices, audience and reach.

Priority 7

Develop a strategic partnership between the region's Councils based on a co-operative model with the capacity to create a position that coordinates a regional action plan; undertakes evidence-based research to develop cultural mapping; shares resources; and grows cultural capital and infrastructure across the region.

STRATEGY

- Resource and/or fund an identified position to develop a regional action plan, initially based on the priorities emerging from the Summit and through further engagement and cultural mapping grow cultural capital and infrastructure across the region.

Agenda for **ACTION**

To assist Penrith Council to effectively advocate to the Commonwealth and State Governments and other stakeholders the priorities identified in this report, Council is requesting that participants at the Summit agree to the priorities that emerged from the Summit.

The priorities are:

1. Advocate for equity in arts and cultural development funding at both State and Commonwealth levels.
2. Establish and resource accessible creative hubs/incubators which support artists, designers and creatives to grow their practice and generate professional opportunities for emerging, mid-career and established artists.
3. Establish and resource accessible artist-run pop-ups across the region, nurturing a culture of art in everyday local spaces.
4. Promote arts and culture to diverse communities by expanding and resourcing community cultural engagement programs and initiatives to maximise participation and access, foster social inclusion and strengthen communities.
5. Establish customised professional development and mentoring programs for emerging, mid-career and established artists in the region to develop their practice, and enhance access to employment opportunities.
6. Develop digital multimedia capacities and hubs/incubators to engage wider audiences and reach, enhancing global opportunities for the regions artists, designers and creatives.
7. Develop a strategic partnership between the region's Councils based on a co-operative model with the capacity to create a position that coordinates a regional action plan; undertakes evidence-based research to develop cultural mapping; shares resources; and grows cultural capital and infrastructure across the region.

A pro-forma has been provided with this report to enable participants at the Summit (either on behalf of a cultural group or organization or as an individual) to sign the pro-forma. This will add weight to Penrith Council's advocacy on behalf of the arts and culture sector in Penrith and across the region.

Penrith Council will also formally consider the Summit proceedings and priorities identified. Council will lead a number of actions with the aim to achieve the Summit objective - that is contribute to a more vibrant and sustainable arts and culture sector in Penrith City and the region. The report will also be forwarded to the Mayors and General Managers of Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury Councils and they will be requested to join Penrith Council in further advocacy to other levels of government for a fairer share of cultural program and infrastructure funding for the region.

For more information go to:

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