



NEWSLETTER NO. 12

APRIL 2010

Hello to all PerfEx members

DETAILS OF SUNSET COMMITTEE AND CONSULTANTS' FINDINGS

I appreciate that you haven't received a Newsletter since before Christmas, but there has been little to report until now and what there has been, has necessarily been confidential, until this week.

On Tuesday morning 27th April, Dave Harding and I attended a Council Meeting where we made a presentation on behalf of PerfEx. At this meeting, the Councillors officially accepted the recommendations from the Consultants' 'Situation Analysis' for the Eurobodalla Shire Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Report.

You may remember that Dave and I are on the Sunset Committee which commissioned this report last year. Consultants Mandy Hillson and Susan Conroy reported their findings to the Sunset Committee on 3rd March, but we were not allowed to discuss the findings until such time as the Councillors had had the opportunity to first of all become acquainted with the findings and then vote on them. It's a large document; the appendices alone are over 100 pages, while the actual report runs to 46 pages.

The Councillors' turn came on 13th April with Mandy Hillson presenting their findings. Subsequently, the leading Council staff member on the Sunset Committee, Peter McLaughlin, Eurobodalla Shire Director of Community Wellbeing, produced a synopsis with the many recommendations compressed into nine. These were accepted on Tuesday, with an extra one added which I explain further on.

Basically, the findings were that there should be no Regional Art Centre for various reasons: - the geography of the Eurobodalla Shire; the distinct personalities of each of the three centres, Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma; the lack of critical mass in any one centre; the hiring costs, running costs and the concern that one central building might be to the detriment of other centres.

However, we feel vindicated because the report does recommend "an arts centre being established in Batemans Bay is an immediate priority arising from this study".

Further recommendations for Batemans Bay included location with suggestions that 1. Hanging Rock or 2. the expanded current Community Centre space leading up to the Water Gardens, be developed for a small art's hub to include:-

- Community gallery
- Performance space (for around 150 seats) for music and theatre
- Space suitable for dance workshops
- Art/craft studios suitable for dry and wet work
- Storage

For Moruya the recommendation is for Council to purchase the Mechanics Institute and the CWA Hall from the RSL and upgrade them for art and performance, to produce this town's Art Centre.

As far as Narooma is concerned, the recommendation is that Council work with their School of Arts by assisting with funding and grants' applications to create the Narooma Arts Centre.

Other Council owned buildings, especially village halls were recommended for upgrade where necessary.

The Consultants obviously tried to make their recommendations as manageable as possible for Council, acknowledging the existing constraints.

At the Sunset Meeting of 3rd March in response to the findings for Batemans Bay, Dave and I challenged the suggested size, and discussed the location and function. Mostly the members of that Committee concurred with our thoughts. These points were included in Peter McLaughlin's synopsis.

These three points also formed the basis of the PerfEx presentation on Tuesday, together with ideas which we thought Council should consider which might assist the viability of the proposed Batemans Bay centre.

Having thanked the Councillors for their faith and support in the funding of the first stage of the study, we drew to their attention the fact that a 150 seat theatre would preclude

organisations like the South Coast Music Society and even St Cecilia from using it and most out of town performances could not begin to be viable with so few seats.

We discussed the pros and cons of the two suggested locations and regarding function, we brought up the idea that PerfEx had been long discussing the inclusion of Conference facilities within a centre to assist with its viability. This particular function was not part of the consultants' brief which only looked at the arts and cultural perspective.

In addition, in order to make the whole concept more palatable to the Councillors, we made the suggestion that the centre might be run by the Tourism arm of Council rather than the Cultural arm alone, to reflect and to take full advantage of the strengths of Batemans Bay, as opposed to a centre purely for art. We cited the Bendigo gallery as an example, being an extremely successful and profitable centre, albeit in a city quite different from Batemans Bay.

We also offered Council \$15,000 from PerfEx funds to put towards the hiring of appropriate consultants to advise on the size, location, function, cost and management for the Batemans Bay centre. Our offer asked for some guarantee in return that the study report would not remain in the bottom drawer! After much thought, the PerfEx Committee had agreed that this could be the best use for our funds. Council moved to consider this offer together with keeping in close contact with PerfEx, the 10th accepted recommendation.

It is our belief that the Councillors certainly feel a degree of pressure to deliver. They are not so nervous about the cost of the building itself, but rather the ongoing operational costs which can run into hundreds of thousands per year.

I feel and hope that our relationship with Council has certainly changed. PerfEx is no longer just a lobby group, trying to convince them of the need for a centre, but we are now working together for a common goal; this is indeed a large step forward although there is still a long way to go.

The Sunset Committee is to continue for the time being and is required to report back to Council in more detail about the infrastructure of the Arts Centres in each of the three Shire locations. We'll keep you informed of progress as we are able.



AGM AND NEW COMMITTEE

Our AGM was held on 15th March. Last year was a busy one with five fundraising events in all. No wonder I was

feeling tired by Christmas! It has to be said that some events were more successful than others. Our bank balance as of 31st December was a healthy \$21,052.01 and we are grateful once again to our auditor Colin Schofield.

The committee membership remains much the same, although, because of commitments, Alan Morton has become an ex officio committee member. We are very happy to welcome Judy Malonyay to our ranks. Judy is an enthusiastic, positive lady who has already brought so much to our organisation. Currently Peter Boys is unwell and unable to attend meetings, but we are so grateful that Peter felt committed enough to want to remain on the Committee. We look forward to having him at our meetings once more.

We are also grateful to Liza Swaine for agreeing to be our Publicity Officer as we need her expertise.

With all good wishes from the PerfEx team

Jean



The PerfEx committee is:

Jean Brewer (President)
Ph 4471 1630
tollgates2@bigpond.com

Dave Harding (Vice President)
Ph 4471 8186
dave_jan@tpg.com.au

Carmel Brophy (Secretary)
Ph 4471 2265
micarbroph@bigpond.com

Bob Kolderie (Treasurer)
Ph 4472 3107
bovagold@bigpond.net.au

Peter Boys (Committee Member)
Ph 4472 2798
pboys@ozemail.com.au

Noreen Ralston Birchall (Committee Member)
Ph 4472 3286
nralston@bigpond.net.au

Judy Malonyay (Committee Member)
Ph 4472 4864
yayjudy@bigpond.net.au

Please feel free to contact any of us should you wish to discuss anything