



NEWSLETTER NO. 13

JULY 2010

Hello to all PerfEx members

SUNSET COMMITTEE

Introduction

Since our last Newsletter in April there have been two Sunset Committee meetings, one late June and the last on 22 July. As a result progress is being made rapidly and, from our point of view, mostly positively.

Hanging Rock

At its meeting in April, following discussion of the Consultant's Situation Analysis Report, the ESC Council inter alia agreed that an Arts Centre should be established in Batemans Bay as an immediate priority and that it include performance, exhibition and workshop facilities.

Council has an opportunity to obtain a Commonwealth grant worth \$2m to develop facilities in the Shire to assist Shire unemployed youth. It has submitted an application with the decisions on grant recipients to be made by the end of August (even though only one in five applications will receive a grant the Council thinks its chances are very good). The building(s) has to be completed by 30 June 2011.

The Council's proposal for the grant is a facility which includes a Community Centre, Youth Café, workshop and performance rehearsal space, and that it be located at Hanging Rock and although being used by the Youth clientele be available to the community at large. At the same time Wollongong University is proposing to enlarge its campus at Hanging Rock and the Illawarra Institute of TAFE is seeking to expand its lecture space.

As a result Council is proposing that Hanging Rock become a Sports (possibly including an indoor heated swimming pool), Education, Community and Arts precinct and that the proposed new Arts Centre be part of this development. Council also believes that there needs to be a master plan for the development of the Hanging Rock area and intends to hire an appropriate Architectural Company to develop this Plan.

The facilities to be included in the Hanging Rock Master Plan will go before a Council Meeting for approval in time for the Plan to be developed and the Youth component completed by the deadline of mid 2011.

Water Gardens

Our preferred location for an Arts Centre has always been the CBD and in particular the Water Gardens. However Council has decided to use that area of the Town for other functions. Further should it be successful in obtaining the grant it intends to demolish the existing Community Centre and sell the land; the proceeds could then go towards the capital cost of an Arts Centre.

Next Stage for the Batemans Bay Arts Centre

Thirty months ago, when we still believed we had a grant from the Commonwealth, PerfEx was going to undertake a Feasibility Study into a Batemans Bay Centre. This would have started with a study of existing facilities and demand for new facilities as was undertaken in the recently completed Situation Analysis. This was then to be followed by a Report covering an analysis of the functions, facilities to support the functions, capital costs, and operational management and costs, with a view to a final recommendation on the best and most feasible option. Both of these components were part of the one Consultancy.

Council has decided on a different approach. It has engaged a lady by the name of Evol McLeod to undertake a consultancy role advising council on the same issues as above but not producing a report as such; Evol's fees will be paid for by Council and therefore our offer of \$15,000 to assist this process will not be required.

Evol is a very experienced Canberra based Arts practitioner and administrator:

- Chairman of the Board of the Belconnen Arts Centre (current)
- Vice-Chairman of the Board of ArtSound (current)
- Board of the ACT Government Cultural Facilities Corporation covering Theatres, Museums and Galleries
- Executive Officer, Australasian Performing Arts Centre Association
- Manager Canberra Repertory Theatre
- Manager Tuggeranong Arts Centre

Evol has also received numerous awards for her contribution to the Arts including an OAM.

Her advice will be based on her own experience, information on other similar Arts Centres in SE Australia, and input from a Reference Group of local practitioners; it

will need to be completed in time for broad parameters to be included in the Hanging Rock Master Plan. Her views will also be discussed by the Sunset Committee and the Committee's views passed to Council.

At the last Sunset Committee Meeting Evol was introduced to the Committee. She gave an account of her relevant experiences at the Tuggeranong venue, which although having only a small theatre and exhibition centre has grown in use since its completion in 1998 to be a vibrant centre. This was achieved in part by instigating a number of youth oriented programs for youth from all backgrounds including some with disabilities. (The lack of theatre size is compensated for by the close proximity of the Erindale Centre theatre; in fact the greatest money earner for The Tuggeranong operation is a twice a year hip hop concert which is actually held at Erindale). As a result operational costs have been compensated in part by grants from ACT Government organisations involved in youth, education and health.

Evol also quoted some inspirational statistical and research evidence of the benefits of cultural activity for a community.

Reference Group

PerfEx was asked to nominate members for the Reference Group mentioned above for Batemans Bay; arts practitioners, youth, the indigenous community and chamber of commerce are to be represented. We will advise the names on this panel once the nominations have been approved. There will also be similar Groups for Moruya and Narooma.

PerfEx/Council Relationship

It is also pleasing that PerfEx currently has a very positive relationship with Council and its advice is keenly sought.

This is evidenced by Deputy Mayor Chris Vardon making a formal proposal at the April Council meeting that PerfEx be consulted as the project progresses, and this being agreed to unanimously by the Councillors.

Conference Facilities

We remain of the view that operational viability of the Arts Centre would be significantly enhanced by a capability to hold Conference meetings; this activity would also assist the Batemans Bay economy. However the current study is related to Arts only and conference activity may well be supported by the private sector. In the end the Council will own and operate the Arts Centre and will take all of the risks and benefits involved.

Conclusion

The last four months have been a period of great progress for our mission:

- A Council which is rapidly moving to address our goals

- A Council that recognises the priority need for a Performance and Exhibition Centre
- A Council which is prepared to provide land and eventually seek the capital to fund the Centre
- A Council that regards PerfEx as an important partner in the process
- A possible facility in 5 -7 years time which the Council will manage and operate



COMMITTEE MEMBER PETER BOYS

Despite still being in Batemans Bay hospital, we are delighted to report that Peter is gaining some much needed weight and junk food is part of this recovery! Whatever's helping, it's wonderful to have some good news and we send our dear friend Peter every encouragement.

With all good wishes from the PerfEx team
Jean & Dave

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

bobvalgold@bigpond.com

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