



NEWSLETTER NO. 28 JULY 2017

Dear PerfEx Members and Supporters

There's so much to talk about, as this is the first Newsletter since March.

Mackay Park



I will begin with Mackay Park. The Sunset Committee has had two meetings since that time, the first on 23rd March and I think you know the gist of what has taken place. Otium Pty Ltd came back with an option which was to place both the Aquatic Centre and the Cultural Arts facility all together on the one site, to the south of the Mackay Park Precinct, that is, all to the left of the entry road beside the Putt Putt Golf. None of this was surprising when we viewed the brief which had previously been unavailable to Sunset Committee Members. The guide was 'financial sustainability' and 'zero capital' input! The idea of course appears to be that the Bowling Club site could be sold off because it's freehold, while the current swimming pool site is Crown Land.

Apparently, even Council staff was in shock, although they had seen it a couple of days prior to our committee viewing. Rob Pollock stressed for us all not to get too excited (I expressed huge disappointment), as he said this is only a first draft. The decision on this day was for a draft sketch to be drawn up so we could understand it better (throwing good money after bad in my opinion).

Our next meeting was on 3rd May, again at the Catalina Club. This time we were shown the Architects' draft impression of the facility, which I really still am not allowed to go into detail about (checked this with Lindsay Usher at our Starfish Deli gathering.) Suffice to say, that the Aquatic Centre and the performing Arts Centre are all under the one huge roof, sharing some amenities, but we're drawn in on the southern, non- visible end of the site, with our

back to the highway. Once more visitors would be driving in along the back of buildings.

Two motions came out of this last meeting; one was to look at seating for 1000, rather than the proposed 500. This came from David Maclachlan who is really pushing for a centre which actually makes money, where you can have big acts, rather than the normal theatre which always loses.

The second motion was to ask the consultants' to do a business plan de-coupling the two projects and moving the Cultural Arts' facility to a stand-alone site on the northern/bowling club end of the precinct.

These motions went before Council on 23rd May, although the 1000-seat option has been deferred as it is a detail which can be discussed later. I spoke in favour of both at Council's Public Forum, but mainly the de-coupling and the motion was passed unanimously by all Councillors present (Rob Pollock was absent). Our next Sunset Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 26th July at the Soldiers' Club. Mention should be made of all the people who came to support us on that day - quite a mixture of people to whom I'm extremely grateful. We filled the gallery.

In the meantime, to help address a concern not peculiar to the arts' people, but to all on our Sunset Committee, is the lack of information-sharing with the committee by Council. We seem to get to know after the decision's made. However, following a requested meeting by Jeff Morgan and Lindsay Usher, the prospect of a more transparent relationship with open and honest communication seemed a real possibility. They offered to speak to the arts people. So, we hosted a get-together involving many arts representatives, at Starfish Deli on the evening of Wednesday 7th June, which went very well, except for two passing remarks from Lindsay.

These concerned two vitally important issues about the interim use of the old Bowling Club which he mentioned were going before Council the following Tuesday Morning, 13th June. The first was a proposal that the club is demolished and a temporary carpark be erected, apparently a resolution from 22nd November, which none of us had heard of! The

second was that RMS had recently approached them about using the Club building and grounds as office and working space in order to build the new bridge! In addition, there was discussion of selling off items from within the building.

Sue Mackenzie and I went to the 13th June Council meeting where Sue made the PerfEx presentation in Public Forum. In response to her speech, the motion regarding the goods and chattels from the Club was amended to exclude those things (bars, fridges, fittings, etc) which might be used should the community use the building in the interim and which would cost so much to replace. That is now in question again and Sue has since written to have the situation clarified. As yet we have no response.

The other two motions were moved without discussion, which means that further costings are to be done on them. I have it on good authority that demolition of the building for a temporary carpark is unlikely to get legs. I suspect that the State Government (RMS) could force the Council for use of the Bowling Club if it proves suitable for their purposes, which leaves us totally up in the air.

However, the very bright news is that on Thursday afternoon of 15th June, Shannon from Andrew Constance's office rang me, on Andrew's instructions, to advise that there is \$100M in grants available for Regional Arts Infrastructure NSW which puts a whole new stance on our vision for the future. I rang the Mayor and she and I both got excited and suggested a meeting between Sue Mackenzie and I and the Mayor and the General Manager which took place on the 21st June, to discuss how we go forward with the Grant. However, that morning, I had a personal call from Andrew Constance telling me that PerfEx was one of the things he wanted to fund! We had a long chat, the detail of which I won't go into here. That same afternoon, our meeting with the Mayor and General Manager involved discussion over the siting, i.e. southern position versus the Bowling Club site, which Andrew seemed supportive of in my discussion with him. Sue and I also aired our views on the lack of consultation and the limitation of the Consultant's delivered generic concept plan, as opposed to one that genuinely reflects the community's needs. The result was an approval for a limited arts' working group representatives.

This meeting was held on the evening of 26th June in the boardroom of the Soldiers club. Attendees were Sue Mackenzie and me, Jean Baker, President U3A and Sunset Committee member, Adrienne Conway, President CABBI – arts' group, Julie Stuart, President South Coast Music Society, David Maclachlan, Sunset

Committee member and Chamber of Commerce President, Bruce Edwards, Edwards Constructions and Paul Biddlestone, CEO Batemans Bay Soldiers' Club. Bruce was asked because of his knowledge of construction and engineering of arts' centres and to help us flesh out our ideas from an expert's viewpoint. Paul was asked because of his knowledge in running venues and to make sure that we avoid direct competition to similar local businesses. (Lyn Woolridge, President of the Pastel Society and Sunset Committee member was unable to attend, but emailed a list of her group's requirements).

There was an overwhelming rejection of the Otium concept design. It was clear that it did not meet the needs of the groups represented. During the meeting, each art's representative gave us size and space indications of what their individual group's needs were to make use of this facility on a regular basis, plus exploring the capability for sharing spaces, especially meeting rooms and workshop areas.

A very real concern was why we're potentially wasting our money on constructing a venue that appears to fall far short of community needs. It would seem irresponsible to proceed to spend money on such a building when Council and the community are aware of this.

Out of all the discussions, it was clear the unanimous preference and economic viability all point to the old Bowling Club refurbishment as a much more suitable and cheaper option, which would also better suit the Minister's budget. If not a refurbishment, then we should look at a new-build truly reflecting the community's needs.

Following this meeting, Sue Mackenzie and I jointly submitted an email to the Mayor and General Manager, listing the concerns and suggestions. No responses have been received as yet.



'Sculpture on Clyde'

I will now endeavour to précis my very busy life with the Batemans Bay Chamber of Business and Tourism Sculpture Committee, of which PerfEx is a financial member, and is assisting with this exciting cultural event, to be held on the foreshore of Batemans Bay from Friday 25th August to Sunday 3rd September. We'd like to make it an annual event similar to Sculpture-By-The-Sea. The aim is to acquire sculpture to enhance Batemans Bay's foreshore and to promote Batemans Bay as a cultural place to visit.

We have the following prizes on offer and you can read about us on www.sculptureonclyde.com.au. Because of a generous first prize, there is anticipation of first class entries. A quality exhibition is very important to us.

- *Sculpture on Clyde Acquisitive Award \$20,000 (awarded at Judge's discretion)*
- *Sculpture on Clyde non-Acquisitive Award \$5,000*
- *Organisers' Award*
- *Emerging Artist \$1,000 (large sculpture)*
- *People's Choice \$1,000 (large sculpture)*
- *Emerging Artist \$1,000 (small sculpture)*
- *People's Choice \$1,000 (small sculpture)*

We are currently seeking sponsorships locally and press releases have gone out. We are looking to involve the local restaurants with 'winter warming' food at the coast. We are asking organizational members, including PerfEx Members of course, to be involved as volunteers (Friday 25th August to Sunday 3rd September). Duties will include handing out catalogues and People's Choice forms, whilst sitting amidst glorious small sculptures. I can think of worse ways of spending a few hours! It will be a vibrant, wonderful time for the Bay, so I'm hoping that a good many of you come forward.

The great news is that Terry Snow (owner of Canberra Airport and the amazing Equestrian Centre, Willinga Park at Bawley Point) is coming on board as a Patron.

Grace Paleg's Digressionists' Exhibition

Grace Paleg's Digressionists' Exhibition was launched by Marion Roubos-Bennett on the opening night of the *River of Art*. I introduced Marion on the night, and Henk took photos and wrote an article for the paper. Actually, Grace and Dougie were away, but Grace's long-time student Dot Ward was in charge and all went smoothly. The PerfEx Award donated by Marion and Henk was won by Grace's student Joshua Adam, a young man with multiple disabilities including autism and cerebral palsy! It was a lovely evening as usual and Grace kindly handed me an envelope the other day with \$80 cash in it; her gift to PerfEx from the gold coin donations for the duration of the exhibition. So sincere thanks to Grace and we wish her and Dougie well on their fabulous UK and Canadian trip.

River of Art

I'd like to take this opportunity of congratulating Sue Barford and her team on another very successful event and thanking Sue for her input into the very solid growth of this event over the years. After years of enormous effort and commitment for the River of Art, Sue is standing down and passing the reins to Robyn..... Having met Robyn and seen her enthusiasm, I'm sure Sue is leaving the organization in sound hands.



Website www.perfex.org.au

I know I've talked about this before, but yes, we are moving into the 21st Century. It was agreed that we'd spend some money and update our look and launch a Face book. Vanessa Hurst is building us a Word press site, so other members, with a Password code, will also be able to post news. We are making it much more interactive and will link to other sites and keep track of Council news also. Henk Roubos (new Secretary) has agreed to be our watchdog in this regard.

New Committee

Please note the new committee members, who took office following our AGM in March. Grateful thanks were extended to Dave Harding who has been such a supportive Vice-President over the years. Fortunately, he agreed to remain as a Committee Member as you cannot replace those years of knowledge.

Grateful thanks also to Dougie Bindon-Howell for this valuable input during the time he was a committee member.

Warm regards, Jeannie and the team.

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