



Batemans Bay Performance and Exhibition Centre  
Working Group Inc.

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# Newsletter November 2019

## Then and Now: Perfex History and Membership

In 2006, as a member of St Cecilia Music Scholarships, *Jeannie Brewer* was very aware that there was a shortage of performance space for workshops and concerts in the Bay. Gathering together like-minded people she raised the idea of a Batemans Bay performance space. Soon, a committee formed for the sole purpose of achieving that aim.

Right at the beginning, that group decided to include the visual artists, as inclusivity seemed the way to success and it was also evident that there was no community arts exhibition space in the Bay, as well as no community performance space. Support from individuals and organisations grew and in **January 2007** the group was incorporated and the name *PerfEx* was adopted. Our registered title was the *Batemans Bay Performance and Exhibition Working Group Incorporated*. Jeannie began her 12-year tenure as President, with Dave Harding her vice-president much of that time. Our mission became:

***"To bring to completion the construction of a centre for the performing and visual arts, to meet the current and future needs of the Batemans Bay Community."***

Numerous events were organised to raise funds, garner support and push forward the process of building a dedicated arts space in the Bay. Many will remember the black and white events of "One PerfEx Night" and "Another PerfEx Night" as just two of our fundraising events.

A study was completed in **February 2010** which found that, although a Regional Centre was not recommended anywhere in the Shire, **Batemans Bay needed an arts' hub as a matter of 'immediate priority'**. This finding was a great vindication of our organisation and efforts.

**Five years later**, with the demise of the Bowling Club as an operating concern, the community saw an opportunity to fulfil that dream, especially when, on the 29th April, 2015, the Eurobodalla Shire Council purchased the Batemans Bay Bowling Club from the Catalina Club (with settlement occurring in a year later 2016), and with the Mayor of the time announcing it was bought for '*Community Use*'.

Needless to say, we were absolutely elated and **in May 2015, Perfex** organised a tour of the old Bowling Club, followed by a public photo opportunity comprising 32 individuals from 13 arts' organisations in front of the old Bowling Club Auditorium. Later that month we organised a large Arts meeting at the Soldiers Club with similar representation and interest. Submissions for its use were put to Council.

But it was not to be. Within months Council had changed their mind and classification/categorisation and the site was on the open market. There was an outcry of disappointment and anger.

However, in early **2016** The Council put forward plans for the redevelopment the whole of the ***Mackay Park Precinct***, encompassing the existing Pool Area, the existing football field and the Bowling Club site. Potential developments were to include a new aquatic centre, arts and culture facility, a conference centre, tourist accommodation, restaurants and cafes, senior's living and a gateway visitor centre.

This was reduced, through a series of stages, to an Aquatic centre, Gym and 350-seat Theatre, with two Arts workshop areas and a dance rehearsal area on the site of the existing pool area.

Things really got underway when Council achieved \$51 million in grants from State and Federal funding sources and established the Eurobodalla Shire Batemans Bay Mackay Park Precinct Re-Development Sunset Committee. PerfEx was invited to join, along with representatives from the relevant stakeholder groups and other interested individuals. The first meeting took place in **November 2016** and since then we have continued to engage with Council and to lobby to have the needs of the Performing and Visual Arts of the Bay included in the Centre.

With **Jeannie's retirement in 2018, Susan Mackenzie** took up the President's position and she, too, has continued to lobby for the Arts' interests – both visual and performing – in this project.

This is now at a hiatus point.

After several draft plans and wide consultation, [a final set of plans](#) was produced in early 2019 and these are now with the State Planning Authority for DA approval. Council-led consultation on inclusions has recently also been completed. We await the development of the Centre and its final form, which is scheduled to be opened in 2022.

Unfortunately, Council has focussed almost entirely on creating a [theatre complex](#) and now refers to it as that. Where is the provision for the Visual Arts in the Bay? At this stage it is only in the projected provision of two small workshop areas (wet and dry) and 'hanging space' with the option of occasional booked space in the theatre or dance rehearsal room.

*So, our work continues until we complete our mission, for a place in the Bay for both Visual and Performing Arts. They may not be in the same building or even the same place, but nothing has changed to diminish the need, or the passionate visual artists who practice here. **The Sculpture on the Clyde** project, initiated and funded by the local Chamber of Commerce, is testament to that.*

**Join us in that endeavour. Spread the word and let our membership grow to keep our vision alive and relevant. (See membership form attached)**

For all that has happened, we still hold high hopes that the Theatre/Arts building at Mackay Park will be an iconic piece of architecture but also become a vital part of community life. We acknowledge everyone who has contributed in a small or significant way and look forward to one day celebrating in our own purpose-built Arts facility.

It will be interesting to see what place that is in the community, or if it will become a commercial centre. Regardless, we at last will have a statement that the Bay has a vibrant Arts thread waiting in the wings.

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**BATEMANS BAY PERFORMANCE AND EXHIBITION  
CENTRE WORKING GROUP, INCORPORATED ~ Known as  
PerfEx ~**

*The Mission of the Batemans Bay Performance & Exhibition Centre Working Group, Incorporated is:  
"To bring to completion the construction of a centre for the performing and visual arts, to meet the current and future needs  
of the Batemans Bay Community."  
Our activities include community representation, fund-raising and lobbying.*

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP** (Yearly from December each year)

**I hereby renew or apply to become a member of PerfEx**

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred given name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Membership**

**Single** – \$20/year **Family** – \$30/ year *If Family, please give partner's name:*

*Please post this form to:*

**The Treasurer, PerfEx**

**PO Box 398**

**Batemans Bay NSW 2536** and either enclose a cheque, or deposit directly into our account:

*Account Name:* **PerfEx**

*BSB:* **641 800** *Account No:* **2004 62452** *Please identify your payment by including your surname.*

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*And one other thing: Please list any connections you have with Organisations/Groups who are potential users of the Centre and indicate any activities you think we should undertake and what role(s) you would be prepared to play in our activities:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (use back if needed)