



## PROPOSAL ONE

Interim utilisation of the existing  
Batemans Bay Bowling Club  
Building for the Community,  
Culture and Tourism

# BATEMANS BAY BOWLING CLUB REDEVELOPMENT JUNE 2016



# Introduction

This proposal is submitted by PerfEx, the acronym for the Batemans Bay Performance and Exhibition Centre Working Group Incorporated, which has been lobbying, networking, supporting and fundraising as an umbrella group for the local cultural organisations for almost ten years. (For further detail see the PerfEx story at <http://www.perfex.org.au/about-perfex.html>)

The **PerfEx** mission statement 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”*

**PerfEx** appreciates the opportunity to outline community aspirations for the interim use of the existing Batemans Bay Bowling Club and we are strongly supported in this endeavour by numerous cultural and community organisations, as well as tourism operators, the business community, educators and trainers, and individuals.

*This document is intended to provide a starting point for discussion* for what we believe would fulfil both what is needed and what we are hearing the community of Batemans Bay would like to see on the current site of the Batemans Bay Bowling Club.

*It is the feeling of the community that we represent that, as we have waited so long for a cultural and community centre we would like to have interim use of the facility until such time as it is being further developed. This could take anything from three to ten years. A lease or MOU could be the basis of community occupation of the site.*



## The Opportunity

A once-in-a-generation opportunity has arisen where the community can co-create with the Council in a collaborative venture in which business, tourism, education, arts and culture would reflect and build our future together. The proposed interim use of the existing Bowling Club would reflect the diverse nature of the community and its creative and entrepreneurial possibilities.

*By combining...*

### INTERNAL

- A multi-purpose performance space for music/concerts/ drama etc in the current auditorium which can double as Exhibitions / Events / Marketing / Large Conference space, etc (using existing change rooms);
- Gallery spaces for local artists, visiting artists and a Museum visual display covering visual arts/aboriginal arts/sculpture/photography/textiles/wood/glass/metal work, etc;
- Workshop spaces: ‘wet’ and ‘dry’;
- A Visitor Information Centre incorporating a retail shop selling the best of locally produced art, craft, artifacts and local produce;
- Café / Restaurant
- Meeting / Training rooms for Cultural and Community Groups eg U3A, Media and Film
- Youth amenities
- Administration
- Storage

### EXTERNAL

- Markets
- Festivals
- Outdoor stage / activity areas
- Long vehicle / caravan / coach parking



# History

*.....the Centre becomes a place for reflecting our community vitality and would become a hub of activity for use by all ages.*

A suggested name is **‘The Gateway Precinct’**, to be known as: **‘The Gateway’**

This would reflect the position the site holds, just after crossing the Clyde, and on entering the Eurobodalla Shire. It would be an opportunity to present the Shire as vital and engaging, and a thriving community in itself, attracting tourism, cultural partners and businesses.

An integrated facility would provide a convenient, welcoming experience for visitors. They can have a coffee, find out what’s in the area, wander through the gallery and check out what shows and events are running (currently and upcoming), plus learn some of our history.

*“Co-working spaces generate their own energy. When you put creatively driven people in the same place where they can focus on what they do best, you see collaborations and support networks develop that foster new business and attract clients,” Ms Cooper said.*

*(From pop-up innovation group sponsored by Council – South Tribe)*

## HISTORY: Performing and Visual Arts and Multi-Use Centre

In March 2010 the result of the Council funded Arts Infrastructure Report found that Batemans Bay needed an Arts Centre as a matter of ‘immediate priority’. Already six years have passed and nothing has been provided.

Currently, there is extremely limited dedicated community arts space in Batemans Bay, apart from the small gallery next to the Tourist Information Centre and the Community Centre which is essentially just meeting rooms. The Arts Community does not have a space to call its own. The old School of Arts in Orient Street was pulled down in the late ‘60’s and the sale of the site funded the ‘community’ basketball court at Hanging Rock which in a very short time was only used for basketball. Consequently, Batemans Bay has not had any real dedicated Arts’ space for nearly fifty years.

Community performance and exhibitions mostly use the Church and schools, and even the Malua Bay Surf Club, all with limited facilities.





# Rationale

Batemans Bay is the designated Major Regional Centre for the South Coast and sits at the entrance to the Eurobodalla Shire and beautiful Nature Coast.

The Bowling Club represents a symbolic gateway to the Eurobodalla, while affording Batemans Bay a sense of community. It can be a showpiece for our town and Shire.

Currently Batemans Bay lacks a real 'heart'. We believe that providing a cultural focal point, bringing many disparate groups together, has the ability to restore the 'lifeblood' to our town. Such a facility would give Batemans Bay the much-needed facelift and focus which it has so long been denied, and the whole Shire will benefit from the spin-offs.

In the developed world, Culture and the Arts are now recognized as the fourth pillar of a healthy and sustainable society along with the social, environmental and economic requirements. All levels of Government are expected to provide this. This concept has recently been re-enforced by the G21 Report.

Research has shown time and again that Cultural Arts' facilities need to be co-located with other tourism services and in the peak population centres, to ensure tourists visit several aspects.

We are being left behind by our neighbouring Shires in providing cultural facilities; the Shoalhaven to our north has a 900-seat performance centre in Nowra, and has just completed a 1000-seat renovation to the Ulladulla Civic centre. To our south, the Bega shire council has provided a 300-seat auditorium in their new Performing Arts Centre. (Apparently the Shoalhaven sees us as their greatest threat as a performance and event provider because of our abundant scenic attractions).

The Eurobodalla has been identified as a low socio-economic environment, in which the three key employers are Tourism, Retail and Aged Care. Overlaying this challenge, with arts/culture /tourism there is the chance to create genuine social capital, while realizing improved education and employment opportunities. This precinct would cater for all age groups and cultures; and encourage social interaction, awareness and respect amongst all generations.

Utilisation of the old Batemans Bay Bowling Club and its surrounds is an economical and effective way of meeting the venue needs of many organisations in the community that otherwise may require their own amenities. It is a clear expression of their commitment to the cohesion of the community that these organisations are willing to share the venue, and adjust to its limitations, in the short term.

It is essential that the Club's spaces are truly multi-purpose. The auditorium and large gallery space has to be adaptable for use for not only arts' based activities, but for product exhibitions, functions, sales and conventions, all of which are needed in this Shire. This brings visitors to town and the wider Shire all year round, filling the motel beds, which might otherwise be empty in the slower months. The Community Centre booking office currently has to turn down those looking for large enough premises for functions and large events.

The Bowling Club already has an auditorium and there is ample gallery space for visual arts, together with workshop spaces and meeting rooms for U3A and many other activities. With minor adaptations, the framework is already there and within the site; and there is room to grow and adapt for some years ahead. This would provide the lowest cost to Council whilst providing for our community's cultural needs.





## What is There

From the Eurobodalla Council website:

Batemans Bay precinct redevelopment:

<http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/inside-council/project-and-exhibitions/proposals>

“The Batemans Bay Bowling Club and Aquatic Centre Precinct includes the former Batemans Bay Bowling Club site, Mackay Park sporting fields and associated infrastructure, the Batemans Bay Swimming Pool and the Mini Golf site. The precinct is located on the western side of the Princes Highway across from the Batemans Bay Town Centre. The land is bounded to the west by McLeods Creek and the Clyde River wetlands. The total site area is approximately 8ha.”

At present the old Batemans Bay Bowling Club building has:

- An auditorium with small refreshment areas either side (water, benches and power points)
- Changing rooms and toilets (3 sets)
- A commercial kitchen and other small-scale food facilities (fridge/micro-wave spaces)
- Several clear room areas of varying sizes
- Meeting rooms
- Office areas with computer connectivity
- Outdoor covered areas
- Cool rooms and cellar
- A plant room
- Store rooms (in the building and in auxiliary structures external to the building)
- Ramp access
- Several entrances
- Large carpark (suitable for short and long-wheel base vehicles: cars, buses, caravans, coaches, Winnebagos, etc)

- Access from main highway via lights
- Bowling greens and outdoor spaces
- Some fenced areas.





## Proposed Utilisation of Existing Spaces

The following are details of our vision and how these amenities would be utilised.

### Multi-use Performing Arts Centre



At present Batemans Bay primarily utilizes the local Catholic Church and High School for its concerts. These have severe limitations on concert and performance style and size of audiences. It is widely acknowledged in all our investigations that a dedicated Community Performance Space is desperately needed.

The current Batemans Bay Bowling Club auditorium could accommodate larger audience numbers and larger performance events, concerts and exhibitions, bringing in income, attention and involvement within the town and the wider community. Men's and women's toilet facilities, change-rooms and storage space behind the stage, (because the sentence structure implies the change rooms etc are also limited), already exist. The acoustics need modification, but our advice is that, with minimal cost, acoustics could be greatly enhanced, although they would still not be sufficient for all types of performance (an aspiration for inclusion in the Master Plan).



This auditorium and its connected spaces also make it an ideal venue for M.I.C.E. (Marketing, Incentives, Events and Conferences) such as weddings, conferences, seminars, camping and caravanning shows and festivals (such as the Batemans Bay Writers' Festival). These could all be accommodated with little modification. This immediately adds financial viability to the spaces.

Young people could gain event management training and work experience in various areas on-site.

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### Visual Arts Gallery Spaces



By providing active areas as well as display areas, the range of active, creative people in the community can be demonstrated and encouraged. The area is home to several arts organisations, photographic groups, woodworking groups and textile arts groups who have all expressed an interest in using the facilities. Our local aboriginal artists are keen to be given the opportunity to display their arts and heritage. The River of Art would be another group who would utilize space each year and local preparation and support for Riverlights could also be accommodated.

Our artists are very excited about involving High School students by giving art classes and encouraging creativity.

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## Proposed Utilisation of Existing Spaces

### Visitor Information Centre

(combined with the Retail Store)

Relocation of the Visitors' Centre would centralize information for visitors, and allow leverage to other business and local interests such as accommodation and sites of interest. The local Historical Museum has committed to small exhibitions which reflect aspects of our heritage, for visitor context and appreciation of the area and its people. Libraries and other organisations will also have a presence.

Our highly regarded Oyster Industry could be promoted by this facility through events, retail outlets, displays and education events.



### Retail Store

(combined with the Visitor Information Centre)

A retail outlet of local produce and products that reflect the area, local arts and artifacts would also be included.



### Education Centre

Rooms will be used by the community for various learning activities by such organisations as the U3A and youth and cultural groups. It would also open possibilities for courses in various fields such as hospitality and tourism (in conjunction with providers such as Adult Education; employment agencies; hospitality groups, etc), providing hands-on training within the venues.



### IT/Computer/Film/Music Centre

Today's business, communication and education worlds are based on computers and internet access. In those arenas creative collaborations produce film, on-line virtual realities, plus business and communication opportunities. We envisage a studio/workshop area dedicated to online creativity and expression. This is another community service/ income-producing aspect of the proposed use of the site. It is vital that we include our youth, and being able to offer this type of education and activity is to be welcomed. Local filmmakers have expressed an interest in presenting workshops for our youth.





## Proposed Utilisation of Existing Spaces

### Workshop / Studio / Activity Spaces



The present facility has various options for workshop and activity spaces, accommodating a range of activities (both 'wet' and dry') such as art workshops, education and exercise spaces for use by such groups as U3A, with its 500-plus members. Currently these organisations use spaces scattered about the area and would appreciate a central location.

### Meeting Rooms



In our community there are many organisations that require the use of meeting rooms – organisations such as Art groups (BBACS, PerfEx, Pastel Society, EFTAG, etc); Community groups (Probus, CWA, Lions, U3A, etc). The present facility can provide these meeting rooms for many groups and would be a welcome addition. Child-minding activities and services could be incorporated.

### Outdoor Stage / Seating and Activity Areas



The covered outdoor areas, such as the portico, could be utilized as outdoor performance areas; café precincts, activity areas and child-minding and child-activity areas. They are also suitable for display walls and information bulletins of the area. There is space for child-minding facilities which can be utilised by all stakeholders of the centre.

### Markets Venue



The large areas surrounding the Bowling Club are very suitable for market events such as community car-boot or artist's markets which would complement specialty and local food-producers markets, such as the Moruya Artisan and Local Producers markets. These would not compete with Corrigan's markets as they would be occasional 'feature' markets or sometimes associated with larger events and festivals.

### Storage

Some storage areas already exist on site. Several cultural organisations have expressed a need for this amenity for such things as exhibition-panel storage; U3A equipment storage and Museum Heritage records.



## Proposed Utilisation of Existing Spaces

### Long Wheel-Base Parking

The existence of flat, open parking area suitable for long-wheel base vehicles opens the potential for increasing the number of coaches, campervans and other long-wheel base vehicles bringing trade and visitors to the Shire. By providing incentives and an interesting and informative focus, the stopover rate could be increased resulting in boosted tourism and trade. It has also been suggested that the bus interchange could operate from here, thus removing the bottleneck from Orient Street.



### Café / Restaurant

One way of attracting and encouraging visitors to linger and interact is through a café. With the commercial kitchen already on site, and Adult Education and employment agencies in the Bay, the café could combine with them and provide hospitality training and experience for youth. Local produce and products could be featured, and visiting chefs could host demonstrations. Event dinners could be held, and catering for events could be facilitated.





## Tourism

We are missing out on potential tourist dollars. Tourism Research Australia, which provides the data for Destination NSW, shows that the South Coast of NSW receives the second highest number of visitors outside Sydney (higher than the Blue Mountains and Byron Bay!). However, it also shows that the South Coast receives the second lowest overnight visitor spend in the State and Eurobodalla itself has the lowest! The reason for this disparity is that whilst Batemans Bay is a designated Major Regional Centre, it does not have sufficient infrastructure and attractions to entice people to stay, and this centre will provide an opportunity to showcase our attractions.

The Tourist Information Centre should be operated from the Bowling Club site, in conjunction with other activities, as the site is easily accessible to those coming into the Shire. Lights at Beach road provide safe turning ability and the site provides ample long vehicle parking.

Bus and coach operators avoid the Eurobodalla as they agree with the assessment that our centre lacks infrastructure and attractions. Nor do our streets accommodate tourism coaches easily. Basically they stop in the Shoalhaven and then Fish Pen at Merimbula. We need long vehicle parking adjacent to services and attractions. The Bowling club site provides this.

Preliminary, enthusiastic discussions have taken place with Oyster Trail representatives who would love to include an Interpretative Centre here. The Batemans Bay Bowling Club is ideally situated as, geographically, it is central to the whole trail and this site is very close to the oyster farms. It would be a shame if we lost this opportunity to another Shire.

The Museum has expressed a keen interest in providing changing mini-displays featuring the heritage of the town to spark interest in further exploration, such as a History Walk.

## Education and Training

Integrated café facilities can be shared by the whole centre and provide training for young people in hospitality skills. Adult Education is particularly interested in this aspect and its capability to offer on-site Hospitality training.

An integrated Centre could afford the opportunity to

conduct “real life” project-based education programs, in which students would provide a key resource.

The Centre provides the perfect environment for ‘hands on’ tourism and retail based training.

## Income and Operations

Preliminary progress has been made on a Business Plan, with community groups indicating of cost of facilities they currently use. For the purposes of this preliminary proposal, we believe that there would be various sources of income generated by the interim occupation and use of this site. However, further investigations have been put on hold until such time as Council approval of the use of the existing premises ‘in principle’ has been given.

- A primary source of income would be from events/ conference and exhibition leasing of the auditorium
- Other income will come from:
  - Payment to Council from the leasing of the café/ restaurant
  - Operation of a retail outlet of local produce, artworks and hand-made products with independent management. This would operate as a business and generate income for the manager and Council.
  - Commission on sale of artworks and products;
  - Community use of meeting rooms, workshop areas and storage;
  - Occasional uses of a specific or targeted nature, such as a festival, exhibition or market.

••• *Local stakeholders should receive the benefit of reduced fees to encourage regular and on-going local use.*

Our discussions on management of the Centre to date suggest that a model based on the points below could work well for all parties:

- Draw up a Memorandum of Understanding with Council;
- Create a Management Board made up of Council and Community Representatives;
- Install a non-Council employee as an overall Manager of the Bowling Club and its usage, paid by Council.



## Conclusion

- The Batemans Bay Bowling Club building is usable as it is, with minor adaptations. Independent advice on the state of the building suggests that refurbishment and some remodeling could occur with minimal expenditure.
- Rather than lying dormant and not generating income nor any marketing advantage for the Shire, this interim use would soon bring in income and demonstrate to potential investors the viability of the venture. Based on current commercial leasing rates for this zoning, this would be the only profitable community facility in the Eurobodalla.
- Council could sell the current Tourist Information Centre and Community Centre sites if they chose to consolidate these services on the site.
- Employing Central Management, and co-managing with the community through volunteers and work experience activities together with the leasing of individual sectors, would minimise management and running costs for Council.
- Integrating the above stakeholders should appeal to State and Federal politicians for funding opportunities.
- Combining all the above facilities would mean that such an amenity would be a-buzz with people of all ages on a daily basis.
- It would provide a 'heart' to the Bay, whilst giving the community the sense of ownership of their own space.
- Sale of the site would yield an immediate injection of funds for the council but is also likely to create lasting enmity against it in Batemans Bay.
- An ongoing CAT (Community, Arts and Tourism) Centre will ensure a reliable and ongoing income and ensure both cohesion and inspiration for the community.

*We believe that this proposal is very worthy of further detailed discussion and planning.*

*Furthermore, all of the above activities can be achieved under the current zonings applicable to the site.*

*We strongly oppose any re-categorisation or re-zoning that would not maintain its community recreation status; and its sale would also be strongly opposed.*





# Benefits of an Arts & Community Precinct

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- Provide opportunities for artistic and cultural expression;
- Provide a mechanism to showcase, communicate and preserve cultural knowledge;
- Provide connection to our heritage and to the heritage of others;
- Provide linkages between community, facilities and open public spaces;
- Create a supportive environment to explore creative ideas, innovation and debate.
- Provide an opportunity for social interaction;
- Offer health benefits associated with regular physical activity;
- Support lifelong learning with a range of educational opportunities for all ages and abilities;
- Support intergenerational education and skill development;
- Provide greater amenity in locations used for community events;
- Enhance the mental and social wellbeing of people in the community;
- Develop social capital and build volunteerism;
- Provide opportunities for people of different interests to interact and celebrate together.
- Create interesting and enjoyable public spaces;
- Contribute to the delivery of community expression and interest;
- Contribute to community wellbeing by assisting crime prevention through purposeful activity and community engagement;
- Increase amenity value in built environments;
- Enhance a sense of ownership or guardianship of public places;
- Contribute to local economies;
- Contribute to the development of a more vibrant town centre;
- Contribute to attracting visitors to the town;
- Contribute to a creative industries sector which, in turn, contributes to the economic diversity and sustainability of the town;
- Improve the skills standards of the workforce through increased educational and experiential activities;
- Develop innovative and creative entrepreneurs;
- Support for the clustering of arts initiatives has recognized spin offs for other small businesses, such cafes and other boutique businesses.

*\*Reference - 'Knox Arts and Cultural Plan 2012-22'  
Knox Town Council, Victoria*



## Who Benefits

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- Broad local community
- Community Art groups
- Visitors to the region
- Local businesses
- Tourist operators
- Individual amateur and professional artists
- Children and their families
- Shire youth
- Senior members of the community
- Community job-seekers
- Local food producers such as Oyster farmers.

## Fundraising

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Community fundraising suggestions:

- Friends of the Gateway - Community, Arts and Tourism Centre: through membership and activities
- ‘Lease’ or ‘buy’ a brick/car/coach space/pavement tile, etc
- Crowd funding via Facebook, etc
- Raffles
- Charity events
- Sponsorship and in-kind contributions
- Fundraising performances and events.





## Supporters

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(41) Specific organisations/businesses (in alphabetical order) who support the proposal to have the Batemans Bay Bowling club utilised as a community hub for creative, cultural activities and community activities, and tourist centre:

- Adult Education
  - Artisan's Nest
  - Aquatic centre Inc
  - EuroSCUG
  - Batemans Bay Arts and Crafts Society
  - Batemans Bay Chamber of Commerce
  - Batemans Bay CWA
  - Batemans Bay Historical Society and Museum
  - Batemans Bay Soldiers Club
  - Batemans Bay Rotary Club
  - Batemans Bay Lions
  - Batemans Bay Writers Festival
  - Bay City Cinemas
  - Batemans Bay Manor, B&B
  - Batemans Bay Swimming Club
  - Bowling Representatives
  - Clydeview Holiday Park
  - Eurobodalla Council Tourism Advisory Committee
  - Edgewater Gardens
  - EFTAG
  - Eurobodalla River of Art
  - Eurobodalla Woodcraft Guild Inc
  - Fine Art Studio
  - Hire n Hire
  - Hospitality representatives
  - Indoor Aquatic Group
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## Supporters

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- Larks after D'Arc
- Lensvision - video/education
- Oyster Industry representatives
- **PerfEx**
- Pike Family investments
- South Coast Music Society
- South Coast Pastel Society
- South East Arts
- South Tribe
- Stanwell Management
- St Cecilia Music Scholarships
- Stepz Dance Academy
- Tourism Operator representatives
- U3A Batemans Bay
- Adult Education

And strongly supported by:

- **Ann Sudmalis**  
Federal Member for Gilmore
- **Andrew Constance**  
State Member for Bega

The following businesses and community groups are an example of those who have pledged practical and in-kind support:

- Local community via the offer of labour and materials
- Bunnings Hardware
- G.J.Gardners Batemans Bay
- Batemans Bay Soldiers Club
- Bay City Cinemas





Batemans Bay Performance and Exhibition Centre  
Working Group Inc.

*We therefore cordially submit this proposal for your consideration as a reflection of community interest in Council maintaining the precinct as Community land, and providing an amenity that reflects the cultural and community life of the town and Shire, and taking the opportunity to do this in the very near future.*

Submitted by:

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