

Finally, a cultural policy for Byron

Members of BASEC, more formally known as Byron Art Space Environment and Culture, have cause for celebration now that the Byron Shire Cultural Policy has now been adopted by Council.

Two of BASEC's members Dee Tipping and Merran Morrison - pictured right in the forecourt of the post office outside the new Community Centre - said they were both delighted for many reasons that this Shire finally had a Cultural Policy. Ms Tipping said, 'For a Shire that boasts a multitude of cultural activities it has been somewhat strange that this Council has been one of the few in the State that has not had a Cultural Policy.'

'The fact that this policy now exists is a tribute to the inspiration and vision by many people over the years.'

'However, the group BASEC was formed with a real determination to drive it past the finishing post. BASEC worked closely with Council through its association with the BSC Social Plan Committee.'

'Members of BASEC like Merran Morrison came along at the right time and with the appropriate expertise needed to work closely



Dee Tipping and Merran Morrison. Photo Tao Jones

with Council. Merran was invaluable with the process of applying for funding through State and Regional Development, structuring a major community workshop, and formulating the draft policy.

'This Cultural Policy will be an important asset for many community organisations and individuals to refer to when applying for funding.'

'As well it lays the foundations for the next very important stage which is the Cultural Strategic Plan.'

'The next undertaking by members of BASEC is the

area between the post office and the new Byron Bay Community Centre.

Merran Morrison and Marc Gerritsen have created a draft design and plan to work in association with the Byron Bay Community Association with the intention of turning this area into a more inspiring public thoroughfare and community meeting space with seating and public art.

If you would like to get a copy of the Byron Shire Cultural Policy contact Robyn Masters at Council on 6626 7000.

26/5/03



BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

CULTURAL POLICY ✓

POLICY NO. 3.42

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SECTION CORPORATE SERVICES

POLICY TITLE CULTURAL POLICY

FILE REFERENCE COR050504

Date Adopted 17 April 2003

Date of Review

1. OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To communicate a cultural vision for the shire
- 1.2. To outline the principles that represent the cultural identity of the shire
- 1.3. To identify the goals and needs to maintain and develop the cultural identity of the shire
- 1.4. To identify strategies for the implementation of the cultural policy

2. DEFINITION

Culture – “A particular state or stage of civilisation as in the case of a certain nation or period; the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings which is transmitted from one generation to another.” (Source: The Macquarie Dictionary)

In defining culture for the purposes of a cultural policy, Council simply seeks to recognise and enhance, not confine or predetermine, the values that give this community its sense of identity and belonging.

Culture is the expression of the history, tradition, heritage, customs, practices, activities, creativity, innovations and values of a community that define them as a distinctive group, past, present and future.

3. VISION

The people of Byron Shire belong to a vibrant community which embraces both traditional and alternative lifestyles, with each of our towns and villages having their own distinctiveness.

Byron Shire Council seeks to work in partnership with the community to ensure our programs reflect the diverse cultural desires of the community. Council works to identify resources needed to enhance the diverse and colourful cultural tapestry of our community and together with the community Council will take a strong stand to protect the characteristics that make Byron Shire unique and ensure this culture can flourish.

Council continues to be partners in reconciliation and agrees to the protection and enhancement of Aboriginal traditions and values in relation to the land and recognition of their status as traditional owners of the land.

4 PRINCIPLES:

The principles which guide this policy are as follows:

4.1 Identity and sense of place

Byron Shire Council recognises that places have cultural meanings for people that contribute to their sense of identity and belonging – meanings that are created and enhanced by the shire's distinctiveness and its liveability. Council acknowledges the cultural contribution of Aboriginal people and recognises this through the Heads of Agreement between Council and the Arakwal.

The cultural identity of the shire is due to an amalgam of its unique natural environment and its social diversity.

Council believes that a strong identity and sense of place is necessary for the effective management of our economic and social prosperity as well as our environmental sustainability.

Council believes that our distinctive lifestyles and sense of place must determine our sustainable future and quality of life.

4.2 Creativity and innovation

Creativity is innovation in all spheres of life

Shire residents' creative resources and endeavours build social, economic, natural and cultural capital.

Creativity is the quality things the community innovate, express in the arts, inventiveness in business and industry, in the acceptance of risk, as well as in the strategies for cultural development.

4.3 Acceptance and diversity

Embracing diversity and acceptance of difference are the hallmarks of our cultural identity and the essential ingredient for sustaining cultural vitality.

Diversity offers every individual or group an opportunity to contribute to a shared culture.

4.4 Access and opportunity

Cultural development is achieved by consultation, openness and participation and access to information.

A culturally rich environment is one that optimises opportunities for engagement in cultural activities, and where self-expression and community involvement are facilitated and encouraged.

Access is affordability, availability and physical access in terms of transportation, safety and design as well as access to information.

4.5 Conservation and sustainability

Conservation is care of the natural environment and preservation of our cultural heritage.

A sustainable future depends on maintaining functioning and viable ecosystems, since no activities can be sustained into the long term without these. A sustainable future requires a well-maintained ecologically sensitive balance between the needs of today's community to develop according to current economic and social needs and the needs of the future communities to do the same.

4.6 Co-operation and integration

Byron Shire's cultural development is affected by many aspects of Council's activities and operations.

This policy recognises that effective cultural development cannot take place in isolation, rather it will take place most effectively where collaboration and collective action takes place, where there are shared aspirations between Council, the community, and the private sector.

5 GOALS

Council, in partnership with the community have identified the following goals to achieve the Cultural Policy Vision.

- 5.1. Develop cultural considerations as an integral part of the management and conservation of the shire's natural environment.
- 5.2. Foster cooperation and acceptance amongst Byron Shire's diverse community and to engage, acknowledge and respect people of all ages, backgrounds and capacities
- 5.3. Focus on physical and cultural needs of young people and foster opportunities for their sustained and meaningful engagement in the broader community.
- 5.4. Foster a caring and compassionate community
- 5.5. Recognise that our villages and town centres are the hub of our communal life, and as such must have a high degree of amenity and sense of place in order to foster a strong sense of community.
- 5.6. Enhance the vitality and viability of our town centres and villages as meeting places, where the social and cultural life of the community is most intensely experienced, and to engage creative resources of the shire in their development.
- 5.7. Ensure that the development of town centres and villages and the provision of amenities is informed primarily by local needs rather than by the needs of

visitors.

- 5.8. Position Byron Shire as a centre for innovation in sustainable creative and cultural industries.
- 5.9. Utilise Byron Shire's cultural resources for the diversification and growth of local industry and the generation of local employment opportunities.
- 5.10. Acknowledge the importance of the knowledge economy and access to information to the economic and social sustainability of the Shire.
- 5.11. Development of an informed, literate and skilled community as the basis of an involved, productive and creative community.
- 5.12. Provide and maintain accessible and high quality information services, including well-resourced and well-sited free public libraries, in order to promote an informed, involved, and skilled community.
- 5.13. Recognise and foster Byron Shire's distinctiveness as a national and global centre for the creative, spiritual and healing arts.
- 5.14. Maintain and enhance facilities for sport and recreation.
- 5.15. Form strong sustainable networks for cultural development between the community, Council, the private sector, regional councils and other government agencies.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- 6.1. Integrate the cultural policy into Council's Management Plan.
- 6.2. Maintain and improve the existing natural heritage data base.
- 6.3. Maintain and improve Council's information Aboriginal heritage.
- 6.4. Maintain and improve Council's information on community-based (non-Aboriginal) heritage.
- 6.5. Establish a Cultural Committee
- 6.6. Develop a Cultural Plan