

cultural planning & policy making with community

Defining culture, policy and planning, local government, stakeholders, data, mapping

Cultural Planning

The Local Government Act 1983 made it clear that councils were expected to be more inclusive and consult with their communities in relation to policy and planning. Councils were also encouraged to support local community cultural development and arts activities.

As councils allocated more funds to the arts, better planning strategies were required to justify the expenditure and Cultural Planning became one of the means to do this. Debra Mills also suggests that new cultural planning tools are required to assist policy makers and city planners, who are facing the economic decline of their cities. They realise that the arts could be used to 're-brand a city, attract new investment and skilled personnel, trigger urban renewal and boost retailing and tourism'. (Mills: 2004)

Jon Hawkes brings culture to the fore and puts it on a par with economic, environmental and social sustainability, he explains:

'Cultural vitality is as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic vitality. In order for public planning to be more effective, its methodology should include an integrated framework of cultural evaluation along similar lines to those being developed for social, environmental and economic impact assessment.' (Hawkes: 2001)

The City of Port Philip agreed and has used this model in their own planning process, incorporating cultural vitality, and giving it the same status as the other three areas. See www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/what_is_cultural_vitality.html

Defining Culture

Before we discuss cultural planning processes, we need to be clear about what culture means. One definition is provided by UNESCO:

'Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs'

UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2002

www.unesco.org/confgen/press_rel/021101_clt_diversity.shtml

A friend once asked me: if we removed everything cultural in Queensland what would be left?

Cultural policy and your community

How do you make sense, in your community, of the complex world of cultural activity? Developing policy around culture is an important way to make a statement about your unique sense of place and the role of cultural and creative industries within it.

Local Government has gradually developed a focus on cultural policy development through their partnership with Arts Queensland in the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF). Over a ten year period the awareness of the significant role of cultural activity in community has risen dramatically.

The work of the Queensland Arts Council has also been vital in this process. The energy of the volunteer members of Local Arts Councils is often the driving force. The performing and visual arts, and the partnership schemes that they bring, have enlivened regional Queensland.

Good governance means taking a leadership role in developing policies that are visionary and that match the aspirations of the community. Consultation is an integral part of creating such policy. In each place we need to ask:

- What are the aspects of the cultural and creative industries that are most relevant to this community?
- What are the strengths and the assets of this place and its people?
- What areas of creativity could best be stimulated to advance the individual artist and the wider community?

This means that each community needs to define this area for themselves and to identify realistic goals and strategies to take them forward. Just remember to always leave a space for the risk takers and the dreamers. Many an eccentric idea has proven a gold mine, or at least given us all a belly laugh that will be remembered long after the policy document has been filed.

Cultural Plan Content

Cultural plans come in all shapes and sizes. What the plan looks like will depend on the outcome required. Is it a whole of council Cultural Plan that will sit alongside the Corporate, Operating and other council plans? Or is it a cultural plan for a particular building, a community group, or an organization?

Prior to any planning process it is important to get commitment from all stakeholders including Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer and council staff who will have carriage of implementing the plan once it is produced.

The cultural plan should reflect the vision and aspirations of the broader community it represents, together with the strategies of how these will be achieved, usually over 3-5 years. This is why inclusive and broad reaching cultural planning consultations are so important. If the cultural plan does not encapsulate the issues of the broader community, including our first people, multicultural groups and special needs groups its implementation can hardly serve the community it represents.

The cultural plan can vary depending on what it is for and who will be using it. The cultural plan most frequently used by local government, is a cultural strategic plan, which is the format we will explore further.

A Cultural Strategic Plan...

- a Strategic Plan within a Cultural Framework responding to community issues
- an Action Plan with a timeline and key drivers
- the identification of the resources necessary to carry out the plan.

Cultural plan format

The cultural plan format will usually be designed by Council in collaboration with a consultant and community reference group. In broad terms, it may include some or all of the following:

Terminology and Meaning	
Terminology	Meaning
Strategic Plan	A long term plan that provides direction
Mission	Our reason for existing
Vision	Where we want to be
Purpose	Clarifies why the plan exists
Context	Where are we now, our history and our understanding of our internal and external situation
SWOT Analysis	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
Themes	The issues which emerge from the community consultations
Goals	What we want to achieve in a given timeframe
Objectives	Ways to achieve our goals (sometimes used interchangeably with goals)
Strategies	Specific ways to enact objectives – the tasks that will realise our goals
Action Plan	Who will do the work with what resources. Actions are linked with the Council's annual operating plan and corporate plan.
Budget or resources	The cash or in-kind resources and partnerships that are required for implementation.
Key performance indicators	How we will measure our progress
Quantitative Data	Statistical data gathered from surveys and questionnaires that informs decision making
Qualitative Data	Information gathered from cultural mapping, interviews, stories and personal reflections that provide a picture of the community and suggest themes and strategic directions.

In summary a strategic cultural plan should:

- Assess the existing situation, trends, needs and opportunities (the SWOT) of conduct an Asset Analysis of the community
- Consult all sectors of the community
- Identify key issues or themes and priorities
- Set goals and objectives
- Develop strategies to achieve them
- Propose courses of action to implement these strategies
- Assemble resources required for implementation
- Establish an implementation committee to oversee this stage of the process.

When you read the above, it is obvious that the cultural plan needs extensive community consultation, which is why most cultural plans can take from six months to two years before they are ready to be implemented.

Participatory process in a Local Government area

Once a decision has been made to review an existing cultural plan or produce a new one, some initial work needs to be done within Council:

- Council may decide to oversee all the consultations using council staff and a community stakeholder group
- they might bring in a consultant to do this work
- or decide on a blended model.

The outcome of these decisions will depend on variables such as: time, financial and human resources, the scope of the work involved and the Council's expectations.

It is during the planning stage that a decision will be reached about the best process to use. The Council may have their own process for developing a cultural plan, tried and tested with previous Stakeholder Committees; or if they use an external consultant, the consultant may introduce their own process in collaboration with Council and community.

A basic **participatory process** might include:

- Stakeholder group formed
- Planning scope, timeline, milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs) outlined
- Target groups identified and appropriate consultation processes designed
- Communication plan developed
- Consultations and mapping conducted
- Consolidated data prepared and provided to Stakeholder Committee
- Additional consultations and mapping, if required
- Themes identified, goals, objectives and strategies agreed
- Action plan and budget devised
- Draft report presented to stakeholder group, Council and wider community for feedback
- Final draft presented to Council for ratification
- Process for review and monitoring of the plan put in place
- Implementation committee nominated
- Cultural plan launch
- Implementation begins!

Three other processes are referenced in the resources below: CANWA, Claremont and Grogan and Mercer but there are many others.

Resources

Community Arts Network Western Australia (CANWA) has formed their own model for cultural planning, which they use to work with local government in Western Australia. Their website is a useful resource.
www.canwa.com.au/programs/planning/

Claremont included the process for developing their cultural plan on page 2 of the document.
www.claremont.wa.gov.au/pdf/Cultural_Plan_2001.pdf

Grogan D. and Mercer C. *The Cultural Planning Handbook: An Essential Australian Guide*, Arts Queensland. 1995.

Asset Based Community Development www.northwestern-edu/ipr/abcd

Stakeholder Groups

Whichever process is used, a community Stakeholder Group should be formed. The Stakeholder Group usually comprises representatives from across the community, who will work with council staff to provide input into the planning process. They do not replace the consultations, but can provide guidance on the process and content. Your Stakeholder Group will only be as effective as the people you select; therefore, you need to make sure you get the best people for the job. One way to do this is to use a Stakeholder Analysis tool.

There are many resources available on how to do a Stakeholder Analysis. A few online resources are listed below.

Resources

Stakeholder Analysis, Bob Dick

A step-by-step description of a method which can be used for a stakeholder analysis.
www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/stake.html

This resource provides a simple process with a Stakeholder Analysis Matrix
<http://erc.msh.org/quality/ittools/itstkan.cfm>

This resources is another simple process, but using a different style of Matrix
www.dpi.vic.gov.au/DSE/wcmn203.nsf/LinkView

This resource provides a more comprehensive process for analysing potential stakeholders. The resource is for aid projects and programmes, but could readily be used for other areas such as cultural planning.
www.euforic.org/gb/stake1.htm#stake

Qualitative and quantitative data

The community consultation processes should include the collection of both Quantitative and Qualitative Data. Quantitative data could be a general audit, with questionnaires sent to all residents of a small community, or a 10% random group, if working with a larger population. Quantitative data is about number crunching and using your statistics to identify issues and assist in decision making. Quantitative questionnaires use closed questions, so that the responses are limited in scope and can be collated easily. The ABS is a good example of the use of quantitative data.

You will usually conduct an **audit** as part of your planning process, in order to find out how many cultural resources are in your community, township or city. For example libraries, art galleries, museums, craft outlets, the different cultural groups, voluntary groups, churches, artworkers and other creative industries.

You can also use questionnaires for qualitative data, using open questions for expansive responses. Qualitative data adds the stories, the dreams, aspirations and personal reflections of the community to the facts revealed by the quantitative data. Quantitative data will tell you how many libraries there are, but the Qualitative data would explore how people are using their library, what draws them to the library (or not) and how the library could improve its facilities. When consultations are conducted, particularly for developing a cultural plan, cultural mapping tools are used.

Resources

Questionnaire Design

www.cc.gatech.edu/classes/cs6751_97_winter/Topics/quest-design/

How to write a questionnaire

www.ssdd.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.05.htm

Objectives in writing a questionnaire

Explores the topic in depth, the following is the download.

www.kogan-page.co.uk/samplechapters/074944181X_sc.pdf

Cultural mapping

Cultural mapping is a process of gathering information about your area such as: arts and cultural practitioners, organisations, cultural spaces, recreational spaces. With this information you can identify issues and make decisions for present management and future development.

Cultural mapping can include both quantitative (auditing) processes discussed above and qualitative processes – the reflections, stories and shared experiences. The beauty of using a mapping process is that it can be tailored for the group you wish to consult. It is not a confronting process and in many cases, the participants can learn new skills or further develop existing skills. Cultural mapping is a process that honours people’s knowledge and shared experience and if facilitated well, will develop capacity and community cohesion. Cultural mapping can take many forms. Participants can:

- share their stories
- take photos of favourite places, which provides a bigger picture when collated
- video and document older peoples’ recollections
- work together to produce a textile, painted, drawn or another larger map of their community, highlighting the icons and places of importance
- share food, values and histories – promoting and celebrating cultural diversity and in the case of our first people, use shared history as a step towards reconciliation.

Mapping identifies:

- what happened before
- what is happening now
- what we want to happen in the future.

The beauty of many of these processes is not only the deepening of relationships between participants from the shared experience, but the ideas that are generated through the interaction. The key outcome of the consultations may be a Cultural Plan, however through creative processes there may be many other outcomes, such as ideas for projects, activities and new businesses.

Cultural planning is not for the faint hearted, particularly on a low budget. However, if done well within a social justice framework, it can bring cohesion, develop networks and be an enriching experience for all involved.

Cultural Mapping Resources

Mapping Community Assets

www.nwrel.org/comm/catalog/detail.asp?RID=10840

Storytelling

Storytelling is one means we use to cultivate memory for cultural values. Peter Orlando discusses this in his paper: ‘Mnemosyne: A Goddess for Storytelling, Creativity, and Reading Comprehension’.

www.pilambda.org/horizons/v84-3/balance.pdf

Cultural Mapping Indigenous data using GPS

www.arwarbukarl.net.au/blog/?p=61

Logan City Cultural Mapping

Logan City Council Towards a Cultural Future.

www.logan.qld.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/86EC166B-3AE0-4098-BCC3-C630C502500E/0/culturalmap.pdf

Cultural Planning Resources

Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government

These Guidelines outline the principles which underlie cultural planning.

www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/Information/CPG-final.pdf

Local Gov and Shires Associations of NSW – have links to all the Councils who have produced cultural policies and plans in NSW see www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/239-cultural-policies-and-plans-in-local-government.asp

Pittwater Council

Provides an extensive profile of the work they have done with regards to their community. Also provides an online video discussing their Cultural Plan www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/community/pittwaters_cultural_plan/video and outlines what a cultural plan means, see: www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/community/pittwaters_cultural_plan

Gosford CP

Based on themes, Strategies and Actions, Financial Impact, Source of Funds, Key Performance Indicators www.laycockstreet.com/cplan.html

Freemantle Plan

Uses Goals, Objectives and Strategies
www.fremantle.wa.gov.au/council/resource/cultural_plan.pdf

International Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

halifax.ca/culturalplan/Learn-CAC.html

Uses a policy and implementation framework. In the Policy Framework, broad Strategic Directions are provided with Goals listed underneath. The goals are broken down into policy tasks and actions for implementing these.

Cultural facilities

Whenever a consultation process is undertaken, the issue of cultural facilities will come up. This is understandable because these facilities are often a source of community pride as well as serving their cultural and recreational needs. Many activities require purpose built or multi-purpose facilities. Whilst some community organisations are in the envious position of owning premises, possessing a perpetual lease or have access to low cost accommodation, many are not.

What can be done if affordable, appropriate space is not readily available? Ideally, local councils facilitate access to community premises, owned and run by the community for the community and are self-sustaining, i.e. generating enough income from activities to meet the costs of running the building, with any surplus income being ploughed back into the building or community activity. In the real world, of course, this is often not the case.

There is no right or wrong way to go about getting support for refurbished or new facilities for your activities, but there are many issues which need to be addressed and things to do if you are going to be successful. You need to be very clear about what you want. Develop a justification/need for the facility, with relevant data to support your case and be able to communicate your aspirations to the people who can assist you in achieving your aim.

UK based Devon Reinvestment Service has developed a fantastic online toolkit, called Developing Community Assets, which highlights the key activities needed to develop a community asset - www.devon.gov.uk/drs_toolkit_all_in_one.pdf.

Whilst it is UK specific in many instances, it provides an excellent introduction to what you need to do, as well as lots of useful universal planning templates.

Planning for facilities

Any major works will require a **feasibility study**. It is not just about checking that there is the population base to support it and getting the infrastructure in place, it is keeping it going. Annual operating costs for a community building can be \$1M or more. What is perceived as an ongoing drain on resources is what makes Councils nervous about investing in the first place.

Many administrators now realise that this investment is returned in ways that are more significant for community building and the achievement of Council's corporate goals than returning a profit in financial terms.

CASE STUDY : Bundaberg Art Society

The Bundaberg Art Society needed their own studio space after 50 years of sub-letting spaces in the city. They worked with a cultural development officer on their strategic plan and negotiated with Council for a space in a small cultural precinct. They then applied to Jupiters Casino Benefit Fund for the cost of a shed structure with large concrete aprons front and back for wet areas for workshops.

The membership grew in the excitement of the preparation phase. The members contributed considerable sums to surmount every obstacle that stood in the way and on their second try at the application the funds came through. It took a lot of tenacity, the gift of time of volunteers to follow through every stage of the enterprise and the generous donations of members, but the results have delighted everyone and will ensure the future of the society.

The Gritty Places Partnership Program www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/gritty-places makes a difference to Queensland artists and communities by transforming old buildings into creative and active spaces. From 2005 to 2009, the Government is providing \$200,000 a year through the Gritty Places Partnership Program to help local councils and community groups convert old council buildings into arts venues.

Many local councils own redundant utility buildings such as former sub-stations and depots which are solidly built and have generous internal dimensions. It is possible to develop these disused buildings into rough and basic facilities which are suitable for a range of messy and noisy activities carried out by visual artists, musicians and performance artists. It is envisaged that artists and art groups would use space within these arts accommodation hubs either free of charge or at a nominal rent.

The Gritty Places Partnership Program contributes to the capital building conversion works providing useable spaces. The facilities could be rough and basic with minimal fit-out works such as toilet, kitchen and office facilities. Workplace Health and Safety, Building, Fire Control and Access standards would be met. Local councils can apply for grants of up to \$50,000 per location to develop a Gritty Places project; however, they will need to demonstrate their financial commitment by at least matching the funding sought from the Government. For more information call 07 3235 4043

Additional texts and resources

Hawkes J. *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning*. Melbourne. Common Ground & the Cultural Development Network. 2001.

Clark I. Sutherland J. & Young G. *Mapping Culture 1995*. See bibliography of cultural texts: www.cultureandcommunities.ca/resources/bibliographies/cultural-planning.html

Mills D. *Cultural Planning, Policy Task not Tool*
www.ccd.net/pdf/art55_cultural_planning.pdf

Mills D. *An Overview of Cultural Planning*. Paper presented at "Cultural Planning with Museums, Galleries and Libraries" 5 November 2004 www.mgns.org.au/files/resources/Culturaloverview.pdf
Williams D. *Creating Social Capital*. University of Illinois. 1995.

Andrea Young Planning Services. *A Guideline for Integrating Community Wellbeing into Planning Schemes*. 2001.

Heartwork: Great Art Stories from Regional Australia, Australia Council, 2004 www.australiacouncil.gov.au/publications/regional/heartwork

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