

# COWRA COUNCIL



# CULTURAL PLAN

2014 - 2018



Cowra  
Council

# Table of contents

Vision Statement	3
Vision	3
Values	3
What is the Cowra Cultural Plan and why do we have it?	3
Review of previous Cultural Plans	6
Cultural Plan Implementation	6
Education, Training and Research	7
Lifestyle	7
Business and Industry	7
Transport and Infrastructure	7
Consultation with the Cowra Cultural Council	8
Key Achievements	9
Related Documents	11



Cowra Japanese Gardens Sakura Festival lanterns

# PARTA

## Vision

A leading, innovative and creative community, proud of our place in history, offering opportunity with the best of country living.

## Values

In all our dealings we will ...

- show and grow leadership
- be positive and work together
- value each other and what we have
- create opportunities for our next generations.

## Cultural Council Mission

To be a vibrant, inclusive community recognising and enjoying our history and diversity whilst stimulating economic growth.

To create a peaceful, culturally stimulating town for the Cowra community to enjoy and for tourists to want to visit.

## What is the Cowra Cultural Plan and why do we have it?

Culture has been described as the most difficult word to define in the English language. Culture incorporates values, places, materials, heritage, traditions, language and expression. It can include art, music, dance, parks, sport, feelings, beliefs, environment and behaviour.



Cowra Shire Council endeavours to unite these ideas of culture into a plan for our future development and focus. The purpose of the plan is to encourage growth, develop activities and events, recognise the importance of places and advocate for community priorities. This in turn assists Council to allocate time and resources to projects of community preference.

Consultation is a vital step in achieving these goals and preparing a plan that is relevant and targeted to the community's aspirations. This occurred through public invitations to be part of the cultural planning sessions with 19 participants attending the two workshops. The sessions gleaned valuable information directing the main focus of the next four year's cultural ambitions. Further consultation was undertaken during the Annual General Meeting of the Cultural Council in August 2013.

Cowra Shire is fortunate by being able to develop a new four year Cultural Plan during a time of major cultural recognition and growth. Australian Federal, State and Local Governments have made great strides in encouraging cultural growth in recent years. 'Creative Australia', published in 2013, is one such federal initiative developed to recognise the significant benefits of culture on society, the financial growth driven by cultural pursuits, and the talents of Australian artists.

The NSW State Government has operated four Cultural Accords with the Local Government Association of NSW to create committed partnerships with a cultural perspective between Councils and the State Government. The Accord aims to instil cultural vitality into regional areas with a funded support base designed to increase access and participation.

ArtsNSW has also released the 2013-2015 Business Plan targeting new objectives of Cultural Policy, innovation, support and collaboration. Regionally, Arts OutWest maintains a strong presence as a partner with local government to promote good governance in the arts sector, develop artistic talent and projects, and to extend participation for communities.

These overarching plans and objectives contribute to a cultural vibrancy not seen before. Cowra Shire Council acknowledges the desire for a liveable community, enriched by culture and people working together. Our Cultural Plan aims to cultivate our unique talents, utilise our natural environment and provide a structure for development of skills.

Cultural content has importance to society above and beyond its ability to generate a profit.

*Bjorn Erik Thon*

Culture affects our views of reality. It provides the mental concepts by which people perceive, interpret, analyse and explain events in the world around them

*James G. Peoples,  
Humanity*

Design creates culture. Culture shapes values. Values determine the future.

*Robert L. Peters*

Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in its scientific advancements and its benefits

*United Nations Universal  
Declaration of Human Rights,  
Article 27*

## Review of previous Cultural Plans

Each planning session reviewed the 2009-2014 Cultural Plan. The purpose of this was to assess the need for continued endeavours to achieve listed objectives, exclude those no longer relevant and include new aims. The reviews found that most of the incomplete objectives were no longer important.

## Cultural Plan Implementation

The current objectives of the plan are listed under themes deemed most significant from the community consultation, following those set out in the Community Strategic Plan. These objectives allow Council, staff, Cultural Council members, other stakeholders and community groups to form partnerships in meeting these objectives. Implementation will occur as time and resources allow within the four year timeframe. The Cultural Plan will strive to achieve each objective however it is recognised that demands and priorities may change.

Implementation of strategies will be reviewed annually by the Cultural Council. This allows resources to be allocated appropriately through the Council financial and administrative processes.



Ceramics exhibition by local artist Greg Daly

## Education, Training and Research

- Artist development including promotion and marketing training
- Work with community groups to help them improve their overall operational standard

## Lifestyle

- Partner with specified target groups to support cultural initiatives such as Cowra Peace Precinct Interpretive Signage, Europa Park development and World Peace Bell activities
- Work with the Aboriginal community to determine a plan for the refurbishment of bridge pylon murals
- Work with Aboriginal community to develop public artwork for Cowra
- Investigate opportunities for Aboriginal Cultural and Performance Centre
- Investigate opportunities and community support for Cowra Cultural Centre/Museum
- Rewrite 'Cowra on the Lachlan' historical record
- Investigate development of a Community Cinema
- Maintain and improve the Cowra Civic Centre as Cowra's principal performance venue
- Increase participation in music and arts festivals
- Raise the number of performers visiting Cowra
- Present a Civic Precinct Plan for adoption
- Upgrade Cowra Regional Art Gallery storage facilities and public entrance area
- Continue to support and develop a Sculpture Park to professional standards

## Business and Industry

- Create tourism and economic growth through event management

## Transport and Infrastructure

- Be an active supporter and advocate of regional and inland rail

# PART B

## The Cultural Council

The Cowra Cultural Council is a Section 355 Committee of Cowra Council, established in 1999 to advise Cowra Council on cultural matters; facilitate communication between community organisations; identify and prioritise cultural needs within the community; and support a strategic approach to cultural development in Cowra through the implementation of a cultural plan.

Over time, the Cultural Council has established itself as a nucleus around which arts, cultural and community organisations can network, and a centralised voice from which to advocate the community's cultural needs. The Cultural Council is made up of volunteer representatives from various community organisations that meet regularly and report to Council through the Community Projects Officer.

### List of Organisations contributing to the Cowra Cultural Council (November 2013)

Arts OutWest	Australian Chapter of the World Peace Bell	Cowra Ballet School
Cowra Art Group	Cowra Arts Council	Cowra-Italy Friendship Association
Cowra Breakout Association	Cowra Eisteddfod	Cowra Musical & Dramatic Society
Cowra Gem and Collectors Club	Cowra and District Historical Society	Cowra Tourism and Visitor Information Centre
Cowra Neighbourhood Centre	Cowra Regional Art Gallery	Central West Library Cowra
Cowra Festival of International Understanding	Friends of the Cowra Gallery	Torsion Choreographic Ensemble
Cowra Great Escape Festival	St Raphael's Choir	The CORRIDOR Project
Cowra Country Music Festival	Individual artists, performers and teachers	Interested Community Members
	The Rotary Club of Cowra	

The Cultural Council provided significant input into the cultural planning process at the following stages:

- Participating in the review of the Cultural Action Plan (2009-2014) on an annual basis
- Maintaining a register of cultural facilities, treasures and historical items in Cowra Shire
- Maintaining a database of cultural organisations and their contact details for regular correspondence
- Researching future projects for Cowra's cultural development

## Key Achievements

Since the Cowra Cultural Council was formed in 1999, followed by the first Cultural Plan in 2002 many significant achievements have been made in infrastructure, communication and participation. These are outlined below.

## Education, Training and Research

- Cultural Awareness training delivered locally
- Ongoing Heritage Advisory service offered
- Educational workshops offered for successful grant applications
- Educational workshops offered for young artists
- School Holiday activities incorporated into annual programs
- Investigation into Cowra Museum undertaken and completed
- Local Government Relationship formed between Cowra and Kogarah Councils. This relationship continues to develop through Councillors, staff and Youth Council exchanges and collaborative visits
- Financial support offered to individuals pursuing cultural talents at State, National and International level
- Artistic skills nurtured through schools by award contributions, performance prizes, organisational support

## Lifestyle

- Cowra Aboriginal Consultation Policy adopted
- Installation of 'Welcome to Wiradjuri Country' signage at entry points to Cowra
- Cowra Regional Art Gallery established
  - Free admission maintained
  - Support Staff role implemented to assist with increased attendances and exhibition planning
- Cowra Civic Centre upgrade undertaken
- Civic Precinct planning underway
- Interpretive signage included at cultural hubs
- Pardey Collection of negatives purchased, cataloguing continuing
- Cowra Public Art Policy developed and adopted
- Support to cultural organisations and individuals for activities and cultural pursuits
- Promotion of cultural activities throughout the region with local and regional media
- Investigation and development of Community Cinema plan underway

## Business and Industry

- Cowra Peace Precinct has created significant development and further major work is planned
- Continued development and maintenance of Sakura Avenue, celebrating the strong links between Japan and Australia
- Collaborative projects identified and developed
- Community celebrations included in Council's annual programming
  - World Peace Day
  - Seniors Week
  - NAIDOC Week
  - Youth Week
  - Festival of International Understanding
  - International Women's Day
  - Australia Day

## Related Documents

This document should be read in context with the following related documents used for reference:

- Cowra Shire Community Strategic Plan and supporting documents
- Cowra Shire Local Environment Plan
- Cowra Shire Sport & Recreation Plan
- Cowra Shire Peace Precinct Plan

These documents are available at Cowra Shire Council or at [www.cowracouncil.com.au](http://www.cowracouncil.com.au)



Entrance to the Cowra Japanese War Cemetery