

# THE JETTY MEMORIAL THEATRE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026



jetty theatre

Coffs Harbour City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Gumbaynggirr people, who have cared for this land since time immemorial. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and commit ourselves to a future with reconciliation and renewal at its heart.

This report (Strategic Plan) has been produced independently by Hawkrigde Entertainment Services (HES) on the request of Coffs Harbour City Council. The information, statements, statistics and commentary (together the 'Information') contained in this Report have been prepared by HES from publicly available material and from discussions held with stakeholders. HES does not express an opinion as to the accuracy or completeness of the information provided, the assumptions made by the parties that provided the information or any conclusions reached by those parties. HES have based this Report on information received or obtained, on the basis that such information is accurate and, where it is represented to HES as such, complete. The Information contained in this Report has not been subject to an audit.

# Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Introduction	4
Background	8
Vision, Mission and Values	12
Our Values	14
Our Stakeholders	16
Prioritised Actions and Goals	18
Key Performance Indicators	22

# INTRODUCTION

## The Jetty Memorial Theatre Strategic Plan

The Jetty Memorial Theatre Strategic Plan outlines the direction for the JMT for the next five years building on recent operations and following review of the following documents:

- Jetty Memorial Theatre Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018.
- Jetty Memorial Theatre Business Plan 2013 – 2015.

The study was divided into a number of key actions which are described in the following detail:

- Consultation with Council operational staff.
- Analysis of past financial and attendance records.
- Review of external data to identify trends and patterns together with consultation with Council staff across NSW operating similar infrastructure.
- Analysis of the online survey.

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The Jetty Memorial Theatre Strategic Plan was undertaken within the context of existing adopted strategic plans and reports of Council including:

- The MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan
- The Coffs Harbour Cultural Strategic Plan
- The Issues and Options for Performing Arts Venues (indoor & Outdoor) report

The Jetty Memorial Theatre Strategic Plan builds on these adopted Plans and aims to ensure that its ongoing operations meet community and audience expectations, guides the theatre's budget and provide a blueprint for continued sustainability of the Jetty Memorial Theatre.

## The MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan

The MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan is a whole-of-community Plan that sets out the long-term aspirations of the Coffs Harbour LGA community. The Plan was prepared by Council on behalf of the Coffs Harbour LGA's residents, business and land owners, Councillors and community groups, and with regard to State and Regional policy direction. The Plan identifies Coffs Harbour as one of the most desirable destinations in Australia - to live, work and play.

The MyCoffs vision is that we are connected, sustainable and thriving and that:

- We love having a vibrant, inclusive space.
- We love having an active, safe and healthy community.
- We love having a thriving and sustainable local economy.
- We love that our community is achieving its potential.
- We love having liveable neighbourhoods with defined identity.
- We love that we have effective use of public resources.

MyCoffs specifically identifies cultural and artistic activities as part of long-term community aspirations. Council is committed to delivering cultural and artistic activities through advocacy, partnerships and as a provider.

Specifically, the MyCoffs Plan states:

We enrich cultural life through art, learning and cultural endeavours and Council's role will be a provider and partner in delivering this indicator and the following outcomes will be achieved:

- our community is recognised for its innovation and creativity and there is increased participation in cultural and artistic activities.
- we value the contribution of arts, heritage and culture to our wellbeing, economy and in creating liveable and vibrant communities.
- we recognize the need for enhanced cultural precincts, venues and public art within our region.

## The Issues and Options Paper for Performing Arts Spaces (Indoor and Outdoor)

The Issues and Options Paper for Performing Arts Spaces (Indoor and Outdoor) provided an assessment of performance spaces in the LGA and includes information and recommendations to assist Council's strategic development and support of both indoor and outdoor performing arts infrastructure and cultural activity across the region.

The Issues and Options Discussion Paper (Interim Findings) for Performing Arts Spaces (Indoor and Outdoor) was placed on public exhibition between 18 December 2019 and 28 February 2020 and 25 submissions were received in the timeframe.

The key themes raised by submissions included:

- support for and location of a new performing arts venue;
- the role of the Jetty Memorial Theatre; prioritisation of sporting infrastructure over cultural infrastructure;
- support for development of cultural events; acceptance of current outdoor venue opportunities; and
- the ownership structure of and community access to a new performance venue.

Public feedback raised that the Jetty Memorial Theatre plays a key role in the delivery of indoor performing arts events in Coffs Harbour. The report also supported venue upgrades to the JMT.

## The Coffs Harbour Cultural Strategic Plan

The Coffs Harbour Cultural Strategic Plan 2017-2022 has the vision to create

**"A vibrant and creative Coffs lifestyle enriched by its natural beauty, diverse people and capacity for innovation."**

The Strategy proposed that Council in conjunction with the community focused on the following goals during the five year period between 2017 and 2022:

1. Engage our community and visitors in the cultural life of the area
2. Create and maintain vibrant cultural and public spaces
3. Understand and celebrate our Aboriginal and diverse cultural heritage
4. Value and support our creative industries
5. Encourage connections, collaboration and partnerships.

The Strategy also outlined a range of roles that Council could undertake to assist the development of cultural activity across the region including:

**Enabler:** Creating an environment for arts and culture to flourish - through capacity building, brokering partnerships, improving access and opportunity, providing cultural facilities, and actively supporting community-led initiatives and networks;

**Leader:** Being proactive, and taking the first step to make things happen in the interests of the cultural life of the region;

**Host:** Making Council spaces available to support local artists and creative businesses, and to improve community access;

**Customer:** Engaging local artists in all art forms and creative businesses to work on Council projects;

**Funder:** Helping communities to realise their own creative initiatives, encouraging diversity and vibrancy through strategic funding programs.

**Advocate:** Championing local arts and culture, leveraging Council's position to generate new opportunities;

**Partner:** Collaborating with the community and other agencies to support arts and cultural activity; and

**Provider:** Directly providing cultural services, including access to collections, theatre, museum, gallery, library services and venue management.

The Policy and Plan were endorsed by the Cultural Reference Group and provide a framework to guide the strategic direction, investment and outcomes of cultural and creative development in the LGA.

This investment includes the provision of cultural facilities and programs, financial support including grant-making, facilitation, and partnership-building.

The goals outlined in this strategy highlight the importance of ongoing engagement with the community and audiences, the presentation of a diverse range of product and the development of broad partnerships and connections across the region.

# BACKGROUND





# The Jetty Memorial Theatre

## History

The Jetty Memorial Theatre (JMT) was built in 1928 as a Memorial Hall for returned soldiers and was used primarily as a dance hall and for cinema. In 1935 the hall was extended to include a stage and supper room. 1952 provided the staging of the first community theatre production when the Arts Council Drama Group presented Tons of Money. In 1964 Coffs Harbour Shire Council was appointed Trustee of the hall and a management committee was formed to oversee the theatre's operation, until early 2000 when its operations were brought under the control of Council with the appointment of a theatre manager.

In 1990 a major refurbishment of the building was completed by The Coffs Harbour Vietnam Veterans. The theatre was closed in 2003 to undergo a major restoration funded by the Coffs Harbour City Council, which transformed the building into a state-of-the art 252 seat capacity contemporary venue capable of presenting a wide range of community and touring shows.

The first professional touring show season was presented in 2007 which gave the opportunity for patrons to see touring shows and for the theatre to become a part of the national touring networks that encompass metropolitan and regional centres across Australia.

When Council adopted the 2013-2018 Jetty Memorial Theatre Strategic Plan an identified vision, set of values and goals were developed for the theatre. This plan had the objective of finding a common ground to uniting all stakeholders.

Over the past 7 years there have been vast improvements in the relationship between the community-based users of the theatre and its management, and a stabilisation of its operations, which provides a sound basis on which to develop this plan.

## Key Products and Services

The core offering for the JMT is a yearly program of performances/shows that is selected and programmed by the management. It is one of the only venues in Coffs Harbour to offer a regular series of performing arts-based shows/performances and the only to be professionally programmed. In addition, the JMT offers a regular series of movie screenings, community arts organisations performances/shows and some commercial hiring.

In addition to the fees charged for hiring the venue, the JMT generates revenue through the activities in the theatre including offering a bar/kiosk, ticketing, marketing and technical service.

## The Opportunity and Strategy

The JMT has an established core audience which regularly engage with the theatre through the annual program. This audience, whilst not particularly diverse, provides an excellent revenue base for the activities that occur within the theatre. There are however opportunities to expand the audience into other markets including children's and families, comedy, live music, physical theatre and the meetings and conferences market.

The key objectives are;

- To increase the overall utilisation of the JMT.
- To increase the attendance at all events, activities and performances.
- To increase the revenue from services offered including technical, ticketing and bar/kiosk.

The systematic development of additional and niche markets will provide the opportunity for the JMT to expand its audience base as well as its reputation across Coffs Harbour and the north coast region.

## COVID-19 Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly difficult for venues such as the JMT as they have had to cancel and/or restrict the attendance at many performances. Additionally, given that many performances in the annual program are accessed from organisations outside of Coffs Harbour and are usually part of a wider tour across the region and interstate, many of these performances are date specific and may not be able to be rescheduled.

Further, the level of reticence of patrons returning to the theatre is unknown and can only be tested by programming and presenting shows and performances.

A green shield-shaped sign with a decorative metal frame. At the top of the frame is a cutout of two theatrical masks, one smiling and one frowning. The sign is mounted on a dark metal pole with ornate scrollwork. The background is dark, suggesting it is nighttime.

**JETTY  
MEMORIAL  
THEATRE**

*Est. 1927*

# VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

## **Vision**

**The Jetty Memorial Theatre is the number one source of entertainment in Coffs Harbour delivering something for everyone.**

## **Mission**

**We provide our audiences, performers, volunteers and staff the best experience by engaging, listening and presenting quality entertainment for all.**

## **Values**

**We have a passion for the performing arts**

**We respect all people**

**We engage our audience**

**We collaborate and partner**

**We are sustainable**

**We provide leadership**



# OUR VALUES

## We have a passion for the performing arts

- Our performances will be known for their quality (technically and the performance)
- Originality will be encouraged within existing resourcing constraints
- Creativity will be respected, nurtured and encouraged

## We respect all people

- Performances will be inclusive for all artists
- The venue will be accessible for everyone
- Hirers will be treated fairly and given exceptional service
- Audiences are treated equally and provided with great customer service
- Volunteers are seen as a valuable member of the JMT team.
- Staff are encouraged to be innovative and ideas are embraced.

## We engage our audience

- By challenging them with a diversified product
- By entertaining them
- By empowering them to engage
- By providing popular and in demand performances
- By encouraging all generations to participate

## We are sustainable

- With local organisations and presenters
- Through regional networks and associations
- By providing learning opportunities

## We have a passion for the performing arts

- Financially meeting our budget targets
- Environmentally by engaging sustainable practices

## We provide leadership

- Locally to our stakeholders
- Regionally by encouraging collaboration and sharing

A photograph showing the backs of several people at an event. In the foreground, two women are visible: one on the left wearing a dark blue dress with large orange and white floral patterns, and one on the right wearing a bright orange dress with smaller white and black floral patterns. In the background, a man in a dark suit is seen from behind, and other people are blurred. The setting appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor event space with a white structure and string lights hanging from the ceiling. The text "OUR STAKEHOLDERS" is overlaid in the upper right corner in a white, sans-serif font.

# OUR STAKEHOLDERS



## JMT Stakeholders

Over the past five years the number of stakeholders in the Jetty Memorial Theatre has broadened. The theatre has expanded its reach through a number of outreach programs in separate facilities. The major stakeholders in the theatre are:

- Audiences.
- Major hirers including community theatre groups, educational institutions, eisteddfods, and promoters.
- Performers.
- JMT employees and volunteers.
- Corporate users, suppliers and contractors.

As part of the development of this Strategic Plan and the accompanying Business Plan, a survey was undertaken of patrons who have attended the theatre. This survey highlighted a number of relevant statistics which the future planning of activity at the theatre needs to address and which the following goals and strategies address. Some of these are outlined below:

- **78% of respondents to the surveys were female and if reflective of the audience leaves a massive audience of male attendees for future activity.**
- **76% of respondents were over 55 years of age which leaves a large proportion of the Coffs Harbour community not being attracted to the theatre.**
- **49% of people were not interested in the product being offered at the theatre.**
- **32% of those surveyed would like to attend comedy.**
- **63% like to attend drama/theatre.**
- **38% of people buy from the bar and 90% said it was good value.**
- **The lead time for booking attendance at the theatre was 2-4 weeks.**
- **56% of those surveyed participate in artistic activities.**

Whilst it is important that all stakeholders are recognised and valued and their needs met, it is audiences who pay for tickets and ensure the ongoing financial viability of the theatre.



# PRIORITISED ACTIONS AND GOALS

## GOAL 1

Engage the community in meaningful experiences through curatorial and programming choices.

### ACTIONS

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCE
Program a well-balanced season including high profile performers, emerging artists, and a variety of disciplines.	High	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Include programming with a focus on outreach and engagement with organizations and broad audience segments.	Medium	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Identify and engage with additional partner organisations in the community.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Create effective relationships with touring bodies, producers and promoters.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources

## GOAL 2

Build and strengthen community relationships and support efforts to increase the capacity and growth of cultural resources within the City.

### ACTIONS

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCE
Apply staff industry knowledge and networks to identify specific programming opportunities.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Build on and expand existing relationships with community performance organisations.	Medium	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Review the role and membership of the management committee and actively utilise their skills.	High	Short term	Within existing resources
Identify cross-promotional and support opportunities based on planned programming initiatives among all community organisations.	Low	Medium term	Within existing resources
Actively engage with other artistic professionals in Coffs Harbour.	Low	Medium term	Within existing resources
Seek to engage with industry professionals and state-based bodies.	Low	Medium term	Within existing resources
Investigate opportunities to present product outside the JMT if appropriate.	Low	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Establish a network of professionals in the Coffs Harbour region.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Survey residents regularly to ascertain their satisfaction with the range of performances at The Jetty Memorial Theatre.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Engage regularly with key users to ensure their needs are being met.	Low	Ongoing	Within existing resources

## GOAL 3

Develop diverse revenue streams and significantly increase the JMT's utilisation rate.

### ACTIONS

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCE
Regularly review the items offered in the bar/kiosk to ensure that best value for money is being achieved.	High	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Increase the level of activity to increase hire revenue, ticket revenue, and secondary revenue.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Seek to develop partnerships that assist in the delivery of operations, events and activities.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Deliver a diverse range of artistic product and seek opportunities that will extend the scope of offer to wider and niche markets.	Low	Medium term	Within existing resources
Audiences will be surveyed to ascertain what types of performances they wish to attend, how much they are willing to pay and the frequency they would attend.	Low	Medium term	Within existing resources
The theatre leadership will work with major users of the theatre to reduce the number of dark nights required for rehearsal to allow other activities to occur.	Medium	Ongoing	Within existing resources
The theatre leadership will encourage more variety in performances and the demographics they reach, in particular children's programs and performances which will encourage midweek attendance. (Jazz, rock, classical etc.)	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Marketing opportunities will be developed to assist both hirers and council programmed performances.	Medium	Ongoing	Within existing resources

## GOAL 4

Sustain and strengthen the organisational capacity, human resources and infrastructure of the JMT.

The costs of running the JMT will be within Council's adopted budgets.

### ACTIONS

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCE
Review the staffing structure to better achieve objectives within current operational resources.	High	Short term	Within existing resources
Identify and take advantage of opportunities for professional development from performing arts networks at the regional and state level.	Low	Ongoing	Within existing resources

## GOAL 4 ... CONTINUED

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCE
Operate at the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness and build financial and organisational resources that promote adaptability and viability.	Medium	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Develop volunteer programs across the venue that assist in the delivery of operations.	Low	Long term	Within existing resources
The Theatre leadership will develop budgets for approval by Council that will be within guidelines set by council with an emphasis on optimising the annual subsidy.	Medium	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Reporting mechanisms will be adopted which will provide costs Vs income statements for all JMT presented performances highlighting ticket sales, discretionary spending per audience member, staff costs and value of volunteers engaged.	High	Short term	Within existing resources
Review and identify any technical infrastructure and equipment upgrades required as per industry standards	Medium	Medium term	Subject to funding

## GOAL 5

### Strengthen internal and external communication.

### ACTIONS

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCE
Prepare marketing plans for each JMT presented performance at the JMT.	Medium	Short term	Within existing resources
Set growth targets for Membership.	Medium	Short term	Within existing resources
Actively engage at the Manager level within Council to develop a greater understanding of the JMT within Council.	Low	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Establish partnerships/connections with local businesses.	Medium	Medium term	Within existing resources
Produce material to highlight the theatres value within the community.	Medium	Short term	Within existing resources

## GOAL 6

The expansion upgrade of the JMT will be completed and embraced by all.

### ACTIONS

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCE
Plans for the upgrade will be peer reviewed to ensure that the upgrade will meet the hirers, the audiences and management's needs.	Low	Short term	Within existing resources
The upgraded theatre will provide opportunities for additional hire of the venue and an increase in the per head spend of audiences attending performances.	Medium	Long term	Subject to funding
Grant funds will be sought to finance the upgrade.	Low	Ongoing	Subject to funding
The JMT expansion upgrade project should align with Jetty Strip detailed design project to ensure holistic precinct planning outcomes.	Low	Long term	Subject to funding

# KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



## Performance indicators

It is important to state that metrics used to measure the impact of the arts tend to focus on direct and immediate impacts, such as audience numbers and audience experience. However, the indirect impact of the arts such as how much a critically thinking individual who engages in the arts can benefit their community should also be included.

The following key performance indicators will be used to assist the JMT to report tangible figures as well as develop a greater understanding of the overall impact of the JMT on the Coffs Harbour community.

Track key performance indicators for short and long-term trends:

- Financial;
  - o Financial results compared to adopted budget;
  - o Ticket sales;
  - o Bar/Kiosk sales.
- Utilisation;
  - o Number of nights JMT open and accessible to the public.
- Attendance figures.
  - o Occupancy rate per performance.
- Performance details
  - o Average ticket price per performance.
  - o Average spend per audience member per performance.

Develop an evaluation process to capture and measure economic, cultural and community impact and report the results annually.

Develop post show audience opinion surveys.

Customer satisfaction as measured through Council surveys

Track hirer retention and satisfaction.





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