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Please note that the set of additional options and recommendations for interim and regional gallery activities are beyond the scope of the brief, which is limited to the existing operational budget.

### **Background**

The Shoalhaven City Art Centre (SCAC) opened in 2004 with a major focus on showcasing local artists works. It is housed in a klinker brick, two story building in the CBD of Nowra, adjacent to the Library. Previously it was owned and operated as a TAFE building.

The Shoalhaven Arts Centre has four gallery spaces - the Main gallery for regional exhibitions and three smaller spaces for community exhibitions. It has a small retail space, a meeting room, staff office, storage and a courtyard on level 1. Level 2 houses a community radio station. The rest of level 2 is currently vacant (and the SCAC is paying the costs associated with Level 2). The spare space could be used to greatly enhance the SCAC operations. Two of the rooms could be readily converted to gallery space. There is sound and computer equipment originally purchased for training purposes, which is now out-dated.

There is a general consensus (that is supported by the survey and confirmed by our review) that the SCAC has fulfilled its brief as a community arts centre very well. The SCAC also has an annual revenue target that requires considerable time and attention in marketing to deliver sales of artworks and merchandise and to rent out meeting rooms.

The SCAC is also responsible for the booking and payment collection of the Nowra School of Arts (which is largely used for community performing arts activities) and the Annex (which has recently been used for arts training).

In 2010 the SCAC joined the NSW Museums and Galleries as a regional gallery. There is broad agreement is that the SCAC has not fulfilled its role as a regional gallery due to lack of curatorial skills, lack of space and lack of resources.

## 6.1 Gallery programs - Community Arts Centre and Regional Gallery

### 6.1.1 Best Practice

#### Community Arts Centre

The Australia Council Definition of Community Relevance

“For an arts organisation, being relevant to a community means sharing a meaningful connection with a community beyond their traditional audience.

Whilst each organisation will approach relevance to communities in a unique way, some common characteristics of organisations that are relevant to communities include being open, listening, valuing the process of engaging and interacting for the benefit of both the organisation and the community.

The framework for reflection

Community relevance is not static, and organisations may find themselves in different phases of relevance at different times. We propose that reflecting on community relevance includes three key reflection stages:

1. Looking beyond the traditional audience and identifying new communities of interest to the organisation – a basic effort
2. Building new and deeper relationships with target communities – a good effort
3. Exploring the creativity of communities – a recommended effort.”<sup>17</sup>

#### Regional Gallery

“Regional Galleries are located throughout NSW, and not always in the larger centres. Nearly all have been established because of the lobbying of community members who wanted a professional facility to house existing local collections, and to show the best local, national and international art to communities deprived of the opportunity to see art regarded as an important part of life in the metropolitan centres.

The Regional Galleries of Australia are almost unique in the world, and demonstrate the great love Australians have for the visual arts. Artists tend to thrive in the areas where there is a Regional Gallery, and there is an argument that shows that where a Regional Gallery is established, there will soon be new restaurants with fine food, coffee and regional speciality produce on offer from local suppliers.”<sup>18</sup>

### 6.1.2 Current Situation

Each year there is an application process for local artists wanting to exhibit at the Shoalhaven Arts Centre. Community shows change every 4 weeks while the exhibitions in the Main gallery generally change every 8 weeks.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research\\_hub/hot\\_topics/community\\_relevance/definition\\_and\\_framework](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research_hub/hot_topics/community_relevance/definition_and_framework)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.rpg.nsw.gov.au/site/index.cfm>

There is strong evidence that that the majority of support is from a committed group of people, probably of about 200-300, who are mostly over 55, female, retired and who live close to the SCAC in north Nowra. This group are regular visitors, exhibitors, artists and volunteers at SCAC. The survey results demonstrate that they like the SCAC in its current form and would most likely be resistant to changes that would be seen to downgrade their usage and access to the SCAC.

The Main Gallery is also used for a number of regular community exhibitions such as the SAS Open Art Competition, Creative Moments. For the first time, this year all of the gallery spaces are going to be used for 8 weeks for a retrospective from the M G Dingle & G B Hughes Collection.

There has been considerable commentary about the exhibitions:

- Community representation is somewhat limited
- Lack of indigenous exhibitions as identified as a priority in smART spaces
- Lack of Regional Gallery quality exhibitions;
- Very little work shown from the Regional Collection;
- Stronger curatorial focus needed for both the community and regional exhibitions;
- Inadequacy of the gallery space for Regional and Community exhibitions
- Limited visitor profile
- Need to attract broader demographic and stakeholder groups
- Greater recognition of the importance of digital content, devices and platforms

### **6.1.3 Additional options and ideas:**

#### *Within the available budget*

- Establish a greater balance between the regional and community exhibitions
- Curate a program of Sam Elyard watercolours from the Regional Collection to then circulate through identified regional galleries
- Stronger curatorial input into selection of the community shows
- Stronger relationships with regional galleries to allow greater access to shows of regional status – shows with more State and National works

#### *Interim Stage*

- SCAC takes over use of second level at current site
- Greater gallery space created on level one – more regional gallery space
- Maintenance or increase of community gallery space
- Stronger relationship with Bundanon Trust for exhibitions – 1 per year
- Digital programs using projection, social media, QR coding, mobile phone/tablet access and information

#### *As a Regional Gallery*

- More gallery space for regional exhibitions
- New regional exhibition every month
- Strategic partnerships with nearby Galleries to share costs of “blockbusters”
- Regional Collection is a valuable asset with 1-2 exhibitions per annum from it (or at least partially)
- Maintain and develop the community exhibitions
- Increased interest in Regional Collection from other Galleries
- Extensive regional program in addition to the community program
- 2 blockbusters of national standard every year with tickets sold
- Relationship with Bundanon Trust for exhibitions – 2 per year
- 24/7 digital programs, access and interaction
- Pop-up shows across the Shoalhaven LGA
- Support objectives in Tourism Master Plan in terms of delivering a positive profile and reputation for Nowra<sup>19</sup>
- Part of Nowra’s cultural, entertainment and events hub<sup>20</sup>
- Strong reputation as a regional gallery because of the curatorial expertise and the exhibitions shown
- Strategic alliances with other regional and national galleries
- Sponsorship of significant exhibitions
- Relationship with philanthropy
- Breadth of appeal of exhibitions for different demographic groups, especially Gen X, Y, Z and Alpha

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<sup>19</sup> Shoalhaven Tourism Master Plan 2012-2017, page 20

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, page 30

## 6.2 Education and Public Programs

### 6.2.1 Best Practice

#### Education

(Note: Art Museums in the US are also Art Galleries)

“Education programs for Art [Galleries] need to:

- Fulfill visitors’ desires for experiences that are more immersive, collaborative, and participatory;
- Do research on learning and employing digitally- based methods to deepen and amplify people’s engagement with art, artists, and creative processes within the environments of an art gallery
- Leverage their unique assets and characteristics as content-rich environments for informal learning.”<sup>21</sup>

#### Public Programs

“The [gallery’s] public programs serve its mission, reflect the goals of its long- range plan, and offer its audience edification and enrichment. Such programs, including, among others, exhibitions, publications, lectures, workshops, films, and performances, and should present and interpret works of art and expand public understanding of the scope of human creativity.

Artistic and educational excellence and public engagement and accessibility must be primary considerations when planning a [gallery’s] public programs. Other valid considerations include attendance, revenue potential, and media response.

Within the context of its mission, the [gallery] should serve as broad and diverse a public as possible by offering a range of programs that provide experiences with works of art, ideas and information must be based on principles of sound scholarship, respect for artistic expression, and the ability to engage the public.”<sup>22</sup>

### 6.2.2 Current Situation

There are two high demographic groups in Nowra – the over 55 female and the under 15 year olds. The 18-35 year old age group tend to go away to study and find employment. There is a youth underemployment issue in Nowra.

With the limited space and resources, the SCAC has a limited program of education and public programs.

The Nowra TAFE ceased providing creative arts courses. There are now a number of ex-TAFE teachers are using the Annex for art classes. This commenced in late 2012.

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<sup>21</sup> National Art Education Association Conference 2012, page 1  
[www.arteducators.org/news/convention/NAEA\\_Conference\\_12.pdf](http://www.arteducators.org/news/convention/NAEA_Conference_12.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [www.aamd.org/.../2011ProfessionalPracticesinArtMuseums.pdf](http://www.aamd.org/.../2011ProfessionalPracticesinArtMuseums.pdf), page 10

The University of Wollongong (UOW) campus in Nowra does not offer creative arts either. This UOW campus was established for people who would not normally get the chance to go to university. They are actively marketing to seniors.

Current SCAC users are weighted in terms of gender and age, predominantly being females over 55. Providing services to a range of other stakeholders and demographics to be addressed

There is a range of professional development needs for local artists, particularly to progress to the next stage in their careers.

### **6.2.3 Additional options and recommendations:**

#### *Within the available budget*

- Continuation/expansion of the Annex being used for education programs
- Greater use of courtyard for talks, readings, performances
- Stronger links with schools and artists
- Program exploring the historical and contemporary indigenous connection in the area
- Family/children program to make art and “hang” it, particularly focused on the school holiday periods
- Business courses provided for artists and artisan organisations (which the Economic Development Manager is prepared to fund)
- Annual strategic planning with the arts organisations across the LGA
- Continue development of marketing of the Arts Trail with other museums in the region such as Bundanon Trust, Fleet Air Arm Museum and Meroogal.

#### *Interim Stage*

- Begin segmentation analysis of visitors with programs for each segment
- Greater connection with curricula of educational institutions
- Create a Discovery Trail and make the link between science and art
- Short film Competition- use SCAC facilities upstairs to shoot a film over week/weekend and then screen on SCAC back wall on Saturday night with a prize – say \$300 or free use of the space for a month.
- Street art on panels on the buildings
- Murals on the side walls – by competition as part of a “Nowra festival”
- Public Art competition for public art trail artworks
- Lectures by visiting identities – educators, artists, filmmakers, digital specialists
- Free wi-fi in the courtyard (if necessary use broadband modems on a monthly data plan to deal with Council concern about security)
- QR coding for private tours – customised for different visitor ages
- Begin segmentation analysis of visitors with programs for each segment
- Internships for university graduates
- Strategic alliance with local artisan guilds to showcase their work (e.g. gold and silversmiths) and attachments for aspiring artisans/designers
- Open Air cinema

### *As a Regional Gallery*

- Hub of digital creative activity
- Digital learning space
- Integration with arts/creative activities across the Shoalhaven
- Extensive material available online that will be sent to your device once you have swiped your phone to enter
- Artists and/or curator(s) give talks about the works several times a week
- Program of artists residencies with live streaming to devices
- Program of artists residencies
- Artists on residencies give talks, training sessions, “tours” of their work or of an exhibition
- Gen X,Y, Z and Alpha catered for

## 6.3 Collection Objectives and Direction

### 6.3.1 Best practice

The USA Association of Art Museum Directors is set up to, amongst other things, set standards of excellence. They have a range of informative positions papers and reports set up to assist those working in the art gallery field, as well as to for professionals to understand best practice. We have drawn key ideas and quoted extensively from their excellent material. (Note: In the USA they refer to Art Galleries as Art Museums)

“The collection exists for the benefit of present and future generations. It should be made as accessible as is prudent for the protection of each object. Every effort should be made to provide information about the collection, document it visually, and respond appropriately to serious inquiries.

[Galleries] must have clear, written collections management policies, including collection goals and acquisition and de-accession principles, procedures, and processes, as well as policies that address preservation, conservation, and collection care.

Gifts and bequests should be unrestricted whenever possible.

When accepting gifts, and where required by law or regulation, the [gallery] must stipulate that the responsibility for securing (and paying for) appraisals and furnishing this information to the appropriate government authorities rests with the donor

The director must ensure that best efforts are made to determine the ownership history of a work of art considered for acquisition.

Cataloguing and documenting works of art in the collection are basic responsibilities of the [gallery] staff. The information should represent sound scholarship and the staff’s informed judgment, independent of any external pressures. Other scholarly opinions, including dissenting opinions concerning a work of art, should be recorded. Major changes in attribution and dating, as well as any serious questions concerning authenticity, should be reported to the board and made available to the public.

The ultimate responsibility for protecting the collection rests with the board while the daily preservation, conservation, handling, storing, and presentation of works of art in the collection are the responsibility of the director. To assure the board’s full awareness of preservation and conservation as primary museum functions, the director should report periodically on the state of the collection.

[Galleries] rely on one another for loans to exhibitions, and a spirit of cooperation and collegiality should inform decisions relative to such loans and the setting of charges and fees. In any decision about a proposed loan from a collection, however, the protection of the work of art, the intellectual merit, and the educational benefits must be primary considerations. The director should advise the board and recommend or approve loans according to established policies.

De-accessioning and disposal of works of art from the collection by sale, exchange, or other means require particularly rigorous examination and should be pursued with great prudence. There are circumstances in which the de-accessioning of works of art from



the collection is justified; however, such de-accessioning must be governed by the [gallery's] written policy rather than by exigencies of the moment.

Funds received from the disposal of a de-accessioned work shall not be used for operations or capital expenses. Such funds, including any earnings and appreciation thereon, may be used only for the acquisition of works of art in a manner consistent with the [gallery's] policy on the use of restricted acquisition funds.”<sup>23</sup>

### 6.3.2 Current Situation

The Shoalhaven City Council has split its collection into two – the Regional Collection and the City Collection.

The Regional collection is more prestigious and has been recently valued by fine art consultant, Stephanie Burn. There are three paintings (Robinson, Boyd and Cullen) on loan that currently are amongst the most valuable works in the Regional Collection. Without the value of the loaned paintings, the Regional Collection is valued at \$852,874.<sup>24</sup>

There are some categories of artworks that are attractive for curated exhibitions – such as Sam Elyard and the Shaolin Temple. Also important in the Collection are ceramics from The Leach Pottery and those local potters taught by Hiroe Campbell, the pastels and the Indigenous art from with a link to the Bomaderry Children's Home.<sup>25</sup>

The storage facilities at the current Shoalhaven Arts Centre are limited in space and quality. Recent work has been done to improve the cataloguing, the storage space with the humidity environment and an upgrade of the database systems.<sup>26</sup>

The current strategic value of having a collection is that it allows the Shoalhaven Arts Centre to be the recipient of bequests. The bequest of the M G Dingle & G B Hughes Collection was set up in 2008. Additional storage needs to be earmarked in the Council long term financial plan to accommodate this collection in the future.

If there is Council approval to move more towards a Regional Gallery, then the contents of the Regional Collection become important as a trigger for curating exhibitions (that can then tour to other galleries) and lending key works to other curators.

The acceptance of work on loan should be determined by the strategic value to the Collection. Where it is decided that there is little strategic value, then works should either be declined or appropriate storage and maintenance costs should be charged to their owners or the works should be returned to their owners. Stephanie Burn also recommends this. If the work on loan is not being actively shown by the Gallery, it is common for the lender to cover the cost of insurance etc.

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<sup>23</sup> [www.aamd.org/.../2011ProfessionalPracticesinArtMuseums.pdf](http://www.aamd.org/.../2011ProfessionalPracticesinArtMuseums.pdf), page 7-9

<sup>24</sup> “Shoalhaven Regional Art Gallery Collection and Shoalhaven City Collection: 2012 Valuation and Report”, Stephanie Burns Fine Art, page 4

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, page 9-10

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

Accept the Burns Report recommendations of de-accession of some works from the Regional Collection.

### 6.3.3 Additional options and recommendations

#### *Within the available budget*

- Approve a revised policy for the Regional Collection consistent with Stephanie Burns 2012 Valuation and Report <sup>27</sup>
- Continue the Regional Collection as it provides the vehicle for bequests
- Identify an artwork by the artists identified as significant and build up acquisition budget to purchase
- Works on loan without a strategic value to the Regional Collection should incur storage and maintenance costs for their owners OR return the works to their owners<sup>28</sup>
- Complete the implementation of the Burns Report recommendations on de-accession of works
- Completion of improvement of the online representation of the Regional Collection

#### *Interim stage*

- Resolve the storage and management issues of the Regional Collection
- Create a Foundation to raise funds for acquisitions for the Collection
- Define unique aspect of collection and begin strengthening number of artworks through acquisitions
- Curate, promote and tour the Samuel Elyard retrospective
- Strategic planning to promote substantial individual artist collections to national significance – Samuel Elyard, Dennis Adams, John Edward, C H (Clarrie) Payne<sup>29</sup>
- Curate, promote and exhibit the Shaolin Temple Cultural Gifts<sup>30</sup> and explore the opportunity of a prize

#### *As a Regional Gallery*

- Distinctive collection that supports Shoalhaven City Regional Gallery
- 1-2 exhibitions per annum from the Regional Collection
- Acquisition budget increased
- Create a national art prize using the name and reputation of Sam Elyard
- Approach the Australian War Memorial and other institutions to collaborate and curate a war artists exhibition<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Shoalhaven Regional Art Gallery Collection and Shoalhaven City Collection 2012 Valuation and Report

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, page 11

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, page 8

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, page 8

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, page 9

## 6.4 Marketing and Promotion

### 6.4.1 Best Practice

“[Morris Hargreaves McIntyre’s](#) seven pillars evidence-based model proposes a set of distinguishing features that all arts organisations could usefully employ to significantly enhance their audience engagement and diversification whilst simultaneously achieving a broader mission such as economic and social regeneration.

The pillars approach requires [galleries] to be as follows:

- Vision-led
- Brand-driven
- Outcome-oriented
- Interdisciplinary
- Insight-guided
- Interactively-engaged
- Personalised

Marketing should be viewed as a catalyst for shaping, communicating, and distributing quality experiences and programmes and reaching the broadest possible audiences. Quite simply, to be effective, marketing must be a [gallery]-wide philosophy in which managers seek to define their customers’ needs within the [gallery’s] mission, values and resource capability. This information is then utilised in the formulation of products and services.

The definition of marketing proposed above should not only ‘inspire creativity and celebrate identity’ but also lead to the following:

- Identification of leisure-time recreation requirements of potential [gallery] visitors and other audiences or users
- Evaluation of relevant offerings and experiences consistent with these requirements
- Consideration of additional or augmented offerings and experiences that are compatible with the [gallery’s] mission and resource capability
- The creative design of an appropriate and integrated series of communications to inform potential users about, and attract them to, the [gallery’s] offerings
- Evaluation of whether newly acquired or repeat visitors and other users are receiving an experience that exceeds their expectations”<sup>32</sup>

### 6.4.2 Current Situation

The SCAC marketing uses traditional paper-based collateral with brochures and print ads. There is also a database of some 700 people who receive e-bulletins. There is some online material on the website but a potential visitor would have to seek it out. There is newly created and limited Facebook presence run by a volunteer.

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<sup>32</sup> “A Modern Approach to Museum Marketing”

<http://www.insights.org.uk/articleitem.aspx?title=A%20Modern%20Approach%20to%20Museum%20Marketing#summary>

The Arts Promotion & Marketing budgets have decreased by 21% in the last four years' budgets. However, the expenditure has consistently been over budget by between 9 and 25%. The year-to-date (6 months) expenditure for 2012/13 is already 9% over the annual allocation.

There is no signage on the SCAC saying what is currently being exhibited or information about upcoming shows. Apparently there is a popular misconception that you have to pay to enter SCAC. "Free Admission" should be marketed widely.

The Library has significant traffic with over 500,000 loans each year. The Post Office would also be a high traffic place to promote the SCAC activities.

Key social media tourism sites like TripAdvisor do not have any mention of the SCAC.

Mention has already been made about the current specific visitor profile (that needs to be retained) but a broader audience/user also attracted. Visitor numbers for 2010/11 were about 17,100 compared to 20,500 in 2006/7.

### **6.4.3 Additional options and opportunities**

#### *Within the available budget*

- Signage on the arts centre – what's on and free admission
- Promotional material at the Library and Post Office
- Separate marketing not generic council marketing
- Friends of the SCAC Facebook page
- Regular sessions on radio - community station Triple U FM upstairs and local station
- Training for volunteers which improves the "face" of the SCAC
- Visitor reviews on social media sites like TripAdvisor
- Greater integration with Council's Tourism activities and marketing

#### *Interim stage*

- Appoint a Patron
- Identify and appoint local champions
- Have discussion with Patron, local champions and Arts Board about possible connections and contacts to use to deliver exhibitions, talks
- Greater stories in art trade publications, online sites
- Stronger links with the Entertainment Centre
- Stronger links with staff handling events at Council
- Dedicated Facebook page, twitter account
- Vimeo (protects copyright) and YouTube space and films
- Increase the number of people receiving online material e.g. e-bulletins
- Stronger relationships with education institutions
- Relationship with Fortune 500 companies in Shoalhaven - could be like Artbank and lend works, or get to sponsor event/work

### *As a Regional Gallery*

- National art prize with high profile judge(s)
- Strong online presence (and personality) using social media
- Interactive website with digital art
- Signature event for Nowra
- Mobile app with what's on
- Business partnerships with local tour operators such as cruise companies, accommodation companies
- Build a network of professional artists
- Bus tours to see exhibitions
- Package tours for school groups with sporting and creative activities
- Host interviews with artists, curators and collectors

## **6.5 Administration and Facility Management**

As this is a Council facility we have not specifically addressed best practice in facility management.

### **6.5.1 Staffing**

There are only two positions (plus some casuals) currently operating the SCAC. One is a 4-day per week Manager and there is a full time Arts Administrative Assistant. The Arts Administrative officer has only 1 day per week allocated to SCAC duties. There are 2 days for other Arts activities – grants, awards, etc and 2 days for managing the bookings and payments for the Nowra School of Arts and the Annex.

There is a higher-level position “Arts Development Manager” that has been vacant for over 15 months. Funding for this is currently being partially utilised for the Acting Arts Project Officer within Council. The arts administrative assistant reports to the senior management position, not the Arts Centre Manager.

There is a total of 3.55 full time equivalent positions associated with the Arts including SCAC, which includes the budget for casuals.

Casuals and volunteers are used extensively, particularly for after hours events and weekends, which are the major public face experiences for the SCAC.

There appears to be a traditional public service staffing structure in operation for hours of work which does not fit well with some of the key requirements for the Gallery. It appears that for the after hours events and at weekends that the Arts Centre is staffed by primarily by casuals and volunteers. There is a need to review the working hours of the SCAC.

Some 7 years ago there was consideration to creating a cultural precinct in the CBD so the SCAC was given the booking and payment collection functions for the Nowra School of Arts. This space is used for the performing arts and has no particular synergy with the visual arts and the SCAC. This became a time consuming task. It does not add value to the SCAC and should probably be ceased. However, this has staffing consequences as 2 days per week of the administrative assistant is funded by the Nowra School of Arts budget. This is apparently being addressed in the current organisational review.

### **Volunteers**

There are a considerable number of volunteers who keep the SCAC running. They also do the hanging for each exhibition.

There is an opportunity to enhance the volunteer experience by getting a group more involved and able to give tours of the exhibitions. They could get a special artist briefing/talk and then notes to enable them to talk about the artwork and engage with the public.

### **6.5.2 Funding**

The level and structure of the funding for the SCAC is the major strategic issue.

While acknowledging that there were cuts due to efficiency gains and cost savings, the following is pertinent:

- The overall SCAC budget has declined in real terms over the last 4 years. The increase from 2009/10 to 2012/13 is only 1.5% over a 4 year period compared with inflation of 9.7%<sup>33</sup>. At the same time the operating expenses for maintenance, garbage collection, electrical, fire detection, security etc. have increased annually.
- The efficiency gains and cost savings do not appear to have been applied to other cultural budgets as severely as SCAC. The other cultural budgets have increased substantially more than the SCAC over 4 years.
- 9% more is spent on cleaning the SCAC than on funding SCAC projects. The cleaning bill includes costs for Level 2.
- SCAC is bearing the costs for Level 2.
- There are substantial cuts in Arts promotion & marketing (-21%) from 2009/10 to 2012/13 despite a pattern of continued over-expenditure. In the current financial year, the annual budget has already been exceeded by 9% after only 6 months.
- A number of the budget categories do not reflect the actual expenditure. This makes financial management difficult.
- Salaries funding is decreasing in both real and actual terms over the four years.

### **6.5.3 Site and building**

The current SCAC was opened in 2004 in a converted TAFE building in the CBD. It is located next to the Library that has over 500,000 loans per annum. This provides the SCAC with a regular stream of “walk-ins” as people come to Library and often drop in to see what is in the SCAC.

The Gallery space is described above with its limitations. Level 2 of the building is currently under-utilised and mostly empty. There is a community radio station in part of the space. There was an original plan to have a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) there to run skill development courses using a range of audio-visual equipment. Unfortunately the RTO selected did not fulfil this intention and vacated the premises some 6 months ago. A new tenant has not been found. Some of the equipment has been taken. However, the equipment is out of date now as the ability to record sound and make films is now on people’s laptops. The functionality of the SCAC would be enhanced by it taking over the spare space in level 2 (particularly as SCAC is already paying the costs). This would enable greater gallery space downstairs, increased storage space for the Regional Collection and the opportunity for a dedicated viewing room.

Arts training seems to have moved to the Annex and is being run by a number of ex-TAFE teachers.

#### *Improved Access and amenity to increase visitation*

The building is uninviting from the outside. Another key issue is the lack of signage. Also a problem is the lack of a café or at least a coffee station in the short term. There is a busy car park at the back of the SCAC.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.rateinflation.com/inflation-rate/australia-historical-inflation-rate>

- The Forecourt would benefit from redesign and the installation of some public art.
- The SCAC needs to have a “What’s On” sign outside the current front entrance.
- A link with the Library next door to attract more people to view the exhibitions in the SCAC.
- Establishment of a Café.
- The SCAC would be more appealing if there was an entrance to the SCAC through the courtyard at the back.

### **6.5.5 Additional options and recommendations**

#### *Within the available budget*

- Appoint a suitably qualified person (leadership, industry experience and curatorial skills) to lead the Gallery, build relationships and improve SCAC status towards becoming a regional gallery
- Review the opening hours of the SCAC
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of SCAC staff
- Changeover of exhibitions should happen when the SCAC is closed to the public
- Subcontract Annex and Nowra Arts School to community group(s) OR streamline booking (e.g. Annex have to book for a term at a time) OR
- Consider removing the booking and payment responsibility for Nowra School of Arts from SCAC.
- Improved signage to show “what’s on” and that admission is free.
- Introduce a coffee/tea station with a “gold coin” donation

#### *Interim stage*

- Increased budget
- Change the name and signage to “Shoalhaven Regional Gallery” (SRG)
- Staffing review to identify additional positions
- Volunteer award given each year to thank the volunteers for their efforts
- Automated booking system – standalone for SCAC – doesn’t need to go through central IT
- Level 2 for SCAC
- Approved social media policy
- Change IT policy to allow staff to use social media sites (Facebook or equivalent, twitter etc) and VOIP services such as skype
- Strategy to capitalise on the broadband available though the National Broadband Network (NBN)
- Greater digital engagement – “digital wall”
- Link to Library to encourage traffic into SCAC
- Improved upkeep of gallery spaces
- Improved storage and handling of the Regional Collection
- Clear delegations and greater autonomy for decision making for the Arts Board
- Greater recognition at Council about the importance of creative activities to attract and entertain ratepayers and residents

#### *As a Regional Gallery*



- Increased budget for SRG and Arts Board
- Full complement of staff including a facilities manager, digital officer, education officer
- Open for the weekend with at least 1 SCAC staff member on duty
- Closed Monday and Tuesday to the public if necessary
- Full digital program and platforms
- Space for bump in and bump out of exhibitions
- If revenue target, 50% to remain with SRG
- Move shop from entrance to end of galleries space
- Shop carries local artisan work and produce including wine, furniture with strong online catalogue
- Operating budget to allow the SRG to pay for exhibitions of national significance
- Adequate storage and database to handle the Regional Collection
- Optimisation of capabilities of NBN for creating works, marketing and access
- Recognition of the role of creativity in success in the digital economy in a high speed broadband environment and role of SRG in this

## **6.6 Facility Development – Expansion and Improvements**

### **6.6.1 Best Practice**

“Site usage

The building's relationship to its location is crucial. Good architecture will speak to this association. For example: a cramped space within a row of brownstones provides a certain feeling and set of challenges that need to be addressed differently than a hilly parcel of eleven bucolic acres.

Display space

The space in an art gallery should allow for unique or interesting display of artwork. Plenty of art galleries must rely upon the mediocre and uninspiring method of repetitive rectangles, hung one after the next. This blasé jumble might be economical, but it is not the best practice. The art itself should be considered before the space is even planned.

Room to view

Galleries require a significant space allowance for art viewing. It is not enough to merely show the work. The space must be ample and appropriate for appreciating the art the way the artist intended it to be viewed. Room to move around a sculpture or step back from a painting is a necessity in good gallery design. The flow should be organic and natural feeling.

Preservation of the artwork

Temperature and humidity controls are a unique concern in gallery design. It is not enough to maintain a comfortable ambient temperature for visitors. A tight set of controls

must be in place in order to care for the artworks and support their physical integrity. Light must also be mitigated to prevent any great changes to the environment and the artwork.

### Good flow

Commendable art gallery design will estimate the amount of traffic and form or flow that the space allows. The proper, comfortable management of the circulation of people will influence the experience of the viewer. Considerations to the manner in which the building is situated in space, connection to the rising and setting sun, site topography, ambient light as well as artificial light will result in good design that takes the viewer on a journey. A design should gently guide traffic in and around the sights with surprise and heightened energy as the net result. It should feel right to the visitor. Upon leaving the gallery the viewer should be inspired.

While a tremendous responsibility is placed on the architect in any design challenge, the art gallery remains one of the most poignant - design within a design, art within a sculpture. One must reinforce or enhance the other without detracting.<sup>34</sup>

### 6.6.2 Current Situation

The current SCAC building is described above. It has been well used to showcase the local artists' work and fulfil the original intention to be a community space.

There are a range of people who want to enhance the current SCAC space to enable better space for exhibitions, particularly of a regional status.

### 6.6.3 Additional options and recommendations

#### *Within the available budget*

- What's on signage at the front and back of the building
- Marketing material at the Library and the Post Office
- Coffee/tea station installed in courtyard
- Gallery aspirations for 2020 are included in the new Council CBD Master Plan

#### *Interim Stage*

- Use of level 2 for the Arts Centre
- Build digital infrastructure
- Free wi-fi
- An accessible Café created with seating
- Improved access from the courtyard to the parking lot
- Public art in the forecourt, preferably as part of public art trail from the river
- Murals on walls - competition
- Programming for a wider demographic
- Install at digital wall
- Films and projections on the building to attract new audiences

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.helium.com/items/1813330-Art-History>

## *Regional Gallery*

Purpose built space - options to explore include the following:

- New building
- Part of a creative precinct
- Possibility of combining Library, Arts Centre and the adjacent building, Better Electrical, to attract developer for new site to include purpose built library/gallery with suitable and inviting spaces
- Precinct could also be near the Entertainment Centre as part of the revamp of the river area but CBD preferred with available knowledge.

## ATTACHMENT D SURVEY ANALYSIS

### Survey Results

#### Summary:

At the time of writing, 244 people have responded to our survey with 89% having answered all possible questions.

#### **Who visited the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre (SCAC)?**

92% of respondents have visited the Arts Centre

65% of respondents have visited the SCAC more than 5 times.

Only 8% of respondents have never visited.

#### **Of those who have never visited the Arts Centre (19)**

50% have no interest in the Arts

26% had a lack of interest in local art and cited the quality of exhibits as an issue

2 failed to respond and the remainder generally indicated time poverty as the significant contributing factor

**The General experience of visiting the Arts Centre** was overwhelmingly positive for all respondents with 82% rating the experience as above average and less than 3% rating the experience as below average.

The number of people who have **never visited any other gallery** matches closely the numbers who have not visited the SCAC – about 8%.

Over 90% have visited another gallery and those respondents had very similar positive experience (greater than 79%).

#### **Rating the Elements of the Experience:**

The individual elements that made up the experience was generally rated as above average with the notable exception “Direction signs to the gallery” which rated only average of 40% and below average of 24%. A number of people recommended signage improvement in the open question of what would make their experience of the SCAC richer.

#### **Main reasons for visiting:**

This question allowed respondents to positively or negatively respond to a range of possible reasons. However, the majority agreed that their primary reason for visiting was either to see a special exhibition by a local artist (85%) or to see art from the Shoalhaven region (85%). 39% of respondents identified with visiting the gallery as an important part of their holiday. Only about 6% of respondents came to the gallery as part of a tour group or with their school.

#### **Comparing leisure experiences:**

In the past two years 90% of respondents have gone to the Cinema, 80% seen a live concert by a professional artist (other than classical), 85% have visited a museum, over 90% have visited another art gallery, and 88% have visited a library.

### **Who were our respondents?**

Our respondents were substantially female and from Nowra and immediate surrounds with only 9 respondents from outside the Nowra area. Of these, a majority of 80% were over 45 years old with 33% over 55 years old and 24% over 65 years old and over 90% of respondents are tertiary educated. More than 7 out of 10 visitors are female.

A significant majority of respondents indicated their income with less than 20% of our respondents enjoying a gross annual income of over \$80k (201 respondents of 240). 31% of our respondents are retired and 61% are working with greater than 30% of respondents working full time .

### **Comparison with Previous Data**

Since the 2010 Museums and Galleries NSW survey of SCAC visitors, the profile of the visitors has some similarities based on our current survey but there are some changes that are significant.

- In 2010, 3 in 4 visitors were female, now 7 in 10 visitors are female.
- In 2010, 66% of visitors were over 55 years or older, now 56% of visitors are 55 years or older
- In 2010, 53% of visitors had a tertiary qualification, now over 90% have a tertiary qualification
- In 2010, 50% of visitors had an income of greater than \$40k per annum, now 62% have an income of greater than \$40k per annum.
- In 2010 70% of visitors lived within the Shoalhaven immediate area, now greater than 90% of visitors live within the Shoalhaven immediate area

The reasons for visiting the gallery have also changed in recent times from 74% in 2010 visiting in order to see a special exhibition by a local artist, rising to 85% with 85% visiting to see art from the local region.

While the number of visits to other Art Galleries since the previous survey has dropped by around 10%, the attendance of some leisure activities such live performances has risen significantly over the same period (76% in 2010 to 85% for live performances).

Attendance of Cinemas remains the same at approximately 90%

### **Analysis**

Unlike the 2010 survey, which was specific to visitors to the gallery, this survey was open to any person to complete via the internet. However, it is clear from the data that the overwhelming majority of respondents are regular users of the Arts Centre. This has made it feasible to draw some comparisons with the data from 2010.

The profile of users has remained largely unchanged except that the same visitors now appear to have, overall, a larger income. Significant, too, is the fact that a very much greater proportion of visitors to the gallery are local residents that have a particular commitment to local and community artists.

It is equally clear from the substantial response to the open question “Is there anything you would like to see in the Shoalhaven Arts Centre that would make the experience richer for you?” (greater than 50% of respondents offered suggestions) that there is overwhelming support for the community aspects and engagement that the gallery currently encourages. It is equally clear that these respondents would like to see the Gallery grow as a meeting place with a substantial number suggesting a café and similar relaxation facilities.

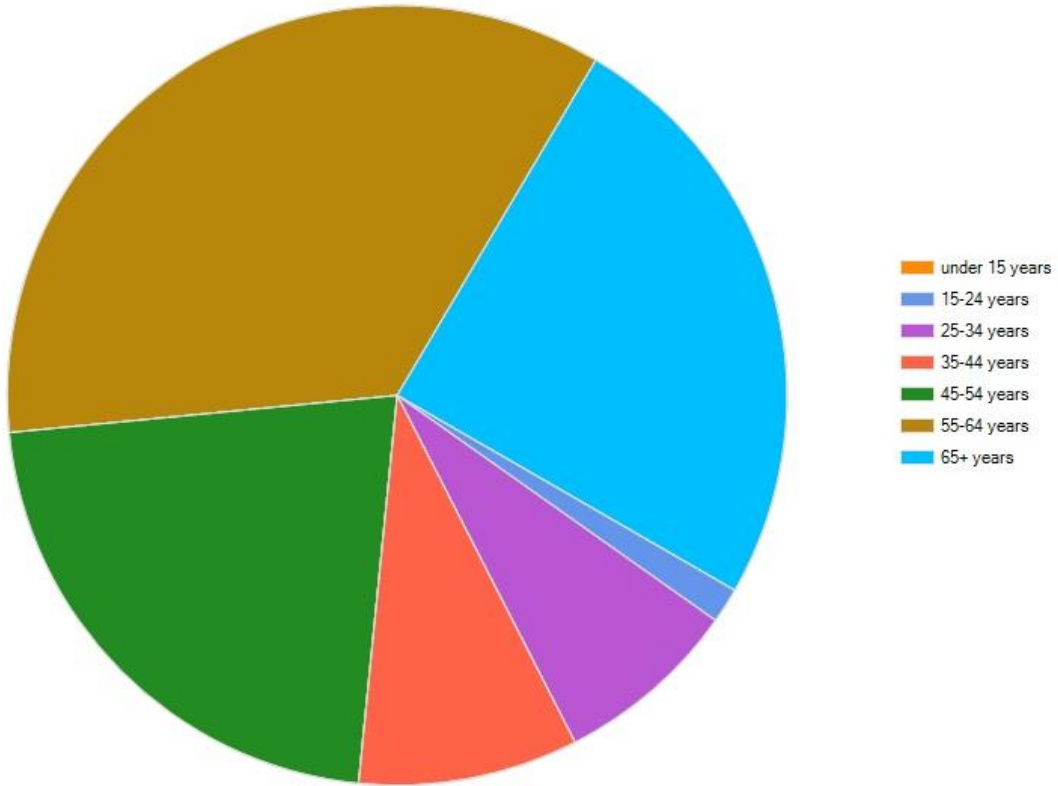
There is considerable support for a broader definition of the arts that includes live performances, music, digital development, and artisan’s work such as pottery and jewellery. The substantial majority of these suggestions are made within a strong perspective of the community and the local.

## **Conclusions**

These conclusions are drawn specifically from this survey with some comparative reference to the survey of 2010:

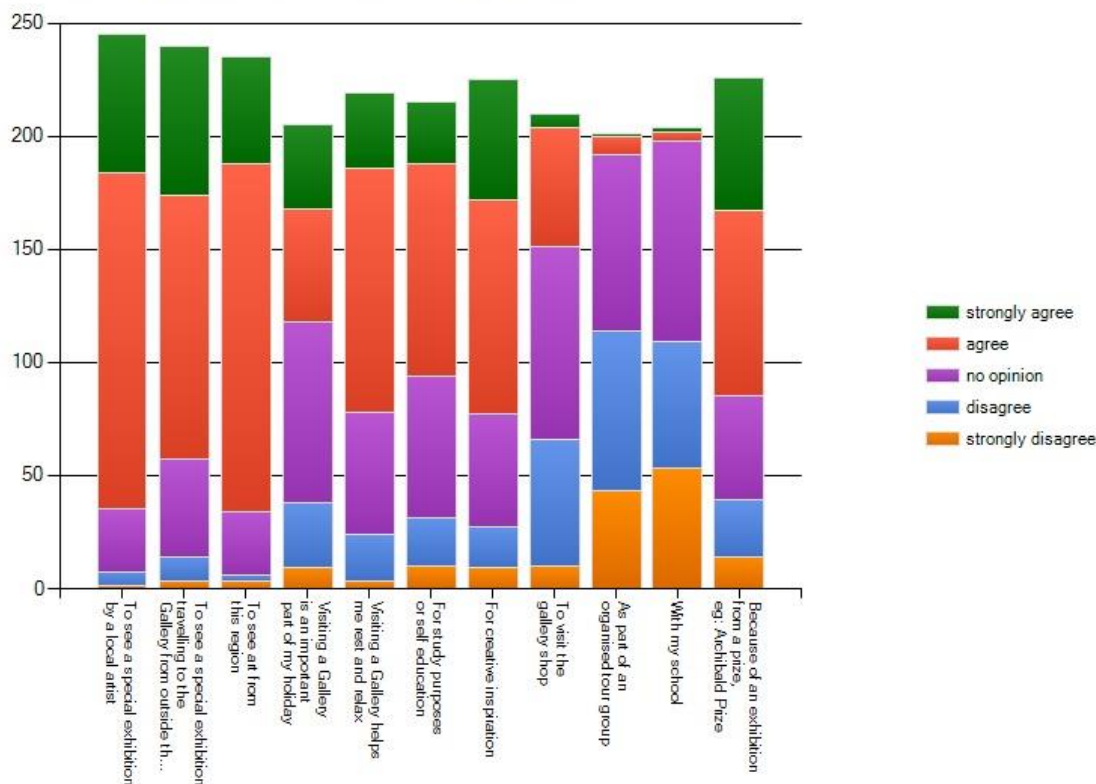
- The demographic of visitors to the SCAC remains narrow – substantially female and over 55.
- It is possible that the reach of the gallery has narrowed since 2010 with a greater number of visitors hailing from the immediate local area and fewer visitors from outside the Shoalhaven.
- The SCAC has currently no appeal to those under 24 years old.
- The SCAC holds minimal appeal to those under 44 years old.
- The appeal of the gallery is very much for the community engagement and local artists within that community perspective.
- There is strong resistance from current users to move away from the community engagement and a strong belief in the need for measures that grow and expand the engagement with the community (taken from response to the open question No 13)
- There is specific support for the development of the SCAC as a meeting place for the Arts and for the inclusion of a café in the Arts Centre. (taken from response to the open question No 13)
- There is significant recognition of the work that the staff at the gallery does and support for the volunteers. A number of respondents have suggested expanding the role of the volunteers as guides.

Which of these age groups are you in?



Answer Options	Response Percent
under 15 years	0.0%
15-24 years	0.9%
25-34 years	7.5%
35-44 years	11.1%
45-54 years	22.1%
55-64 years	34.5%
65+ years	23.9%

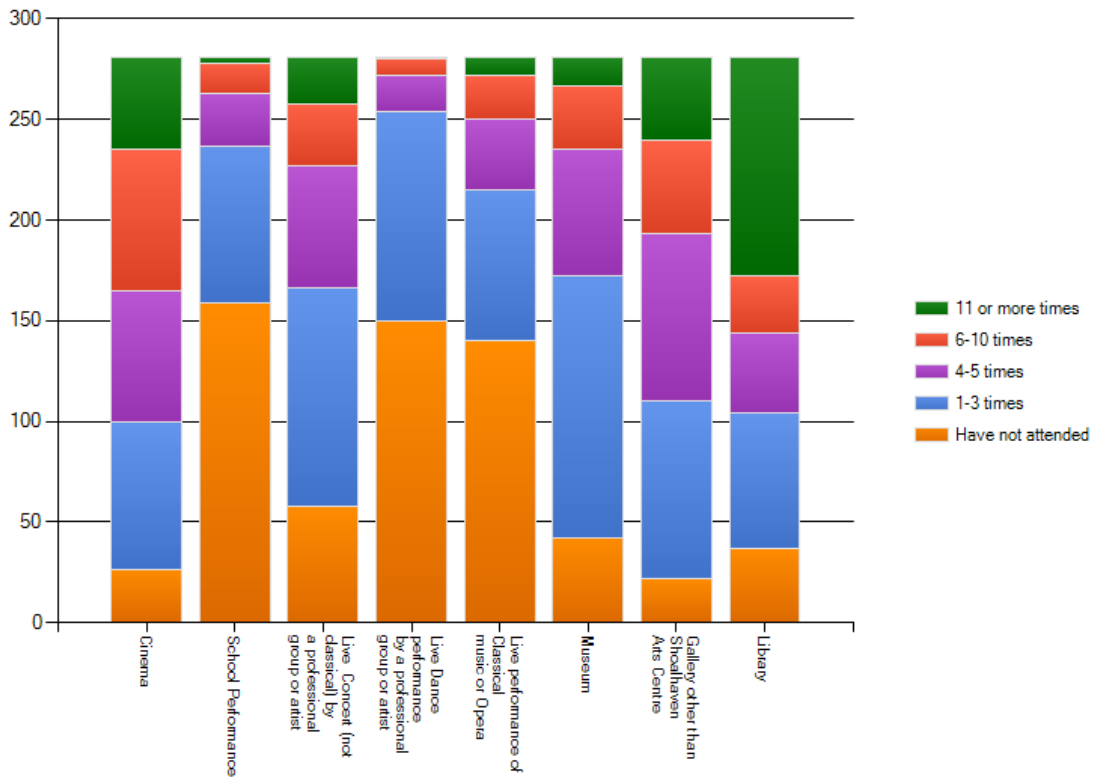
### What were the main reasons you visited the Shoalhaven Arts Centre?



Answer Options	strongly disagree	disagree	no opinion	agree	strongly agree
To see a special exhibition by a local artist	1	4	22	124	47
To see a special exhibition travelling to the Gallery from outside the region	2	8	35	95	54
To see art from this region	3	2	23	127	37
Visiting a Gallery is an important part of my holiday	7	21	71	39	30
Visiting a Gallery helps me rest and relax	2	15	48	87	28
For study purposes or self education	6	15	53	79	24
For creative inspiration	5	13	43	76	47
To visit the gallery shop	8	48	72	41	5
As part of an organised tour group	34	56	66	8	1
With my school	43	45	75	2	2
Because of an exhibition from a prize, eg: Archibald Prize	12	18	37	68	50



Over the last 2 years how many times have you visited



Answer Options	Have not attended	1-3 times	4-5 times	6-10 times	11 or more times
Cinema	22	59	50	60	40
School Performance	128	68	19	14	2
Live Concert (not classical) by a professional group or artist	46	86	51	28	20
Live Dance performance by a professional group or artist	123	86	15	6	1
Live performance of Classical music or Opera	117	61	29	17	7
Museum	34	108	54	24	11
Gallery other than Shoalhaven Arts Centre	20	75	70	39	27
Library	29	53	37	22	90