

11. Surf Coast Arts and Culture Strategy 2009-2014 -

(This strategy was reviewed in 25 May 2011)

The following extract demonstrates that the LMH Feasibility Study is in line with the Shire/Council Arts and Culture Strategy over the past 10 years.

Future vision

As many involved in the consultation believe that the major issue is the lack of an arts hub, there was animated discussion at the workshops and interviews about physical facilities

Having a multi-purpose auditorium and gallery space where a range of diverse activities and events could be staged was the dream of many. An outdoor open shell for performance and music was mentioned by many.

1.3 Vision and objectives

The strategy's vision of creating "*a range of diverse, inspirational opportunities for the community to experience and appreciate all aspects of arts and culture*" directly aligns with the Shire's vision as a place of wellbeing where quality of life and community connections are preserved.

Its broad objectives encapsulate the community's desires and needs while describing what Council will achieve over the next five years to realise its arts and culture vision. These objectives are to:

1. Provide community arts events, programs and facilities to attract and engage more residents, ratepayers and community groups.
2. Develop support and provide increased funding for a diverse range of annual community arts programs and events linked with arts practitioners, community groups, neighbourhood houses, schools, seniors, youth and the unemployed.
3. Provide adequate staffing levels to develop partnerships and funding for increased arts and culture programming.
4. Provide effective and relevant information to all residents and ratepayers to build audience development and opportunities for involvement in arts and culture.
5. Develop a public art program that builds awareness and creates opportunities for local artists and broad community involvement.
6. Ensure strategic partnerships across government, industry, business, education and community groups to further strengthen

Extract from Surf Coast Arts and Culture Strategy - May 2011 2009-2013 Page 5-6

12. Testimonials/ Community Support Letters

17 th May 2018	Cr David Bell	Mayor Column Surfcoast Times
20 th May 2017	Christine Davey	Director, Skin of our Teeth Productions, Geelong
18th May 2017	Gail Chrisfield	Journalist
Various 2017	Helen Gibbins, Sylvia Gray, Rose Hodge	
28th March 2014	Bryan Eaton PhD	President, Geelong Repertory Theatre Co.
25th March 2014	Colin Mockett.	Drop of a Hat Productions, Geelong
25th March 2014	Colin Mockett	Entertainment Geelong
24th March 2014	Sandy Fairthorne	Playwright
19th March 2014	Janet Brown,	Playwright
18th July 2010	John Adams	Froth and Bubble Festival
Undated	Kevin Harrington	Actor and teacher

17th May 2018

Surf Coast Times

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SURF COAST CORNER



Mayor's column

Thanks to our volunteers

Here's a statistic I heard recently which gave me a very pleasant surprise – the 2016 census revealed that 6514 people aged over 15 within Surf Coast Shire counted themselves as volunteers.

That's up almost 1100 from 2011 and in my view a truly extraordinary number.

While I knew that we had a wonderful volunteer ethic in our municipality, I wasn't aware that the numbers were quite that big.

That means 28 per cent of our population are volunteering, compared with 17.6 per cent in Melbourne.

These people are greatly enriching the lives of others as well as gaining fulfilment themselves, and each and every one of them should take a bow as we prepare to celebrate National Volunteers Week from Monday 21 May.

The theme of the week sums it up – Give A Little, Change A Lot.

Our volunteers are one of the essential glues binding our communities, giving up their precious time and contributing in so many ways.

Of course Council is very grateful for their support in a number of areas, including delivering meals to people in their homes, helping out at our visitor information centres and contributing to our Section 86 committees which carry out important work like helping to administer public properties.

Council will be paying tribute to its volunteers at a special recognition event on Monday.

One of my pet peeves these days is that so many things that we talk about so often get equated to money value.

There is simply no dollar value you could put on the contributions our volunteers make to our communities.

So with all of that in mind, next week make sure that you take time of your own to thank a volunteer!

Recycling matters

Do you know your household waste recycling rules? They're probably more important than ever before, after China's upgrading of standards on the recyclable material it will accept from Australia.

Contrary to what some people might be thinking, our recycling is still going to China and not landfill, so we must ensure it is sorted as cleanly as possible.

I had a fun session this week recording a little recycling information video for Council's website, with a demonstration on what waste goes in which bins and emphasising the message that we need to keep recycling and keep it clean.

Basically everyone is doing well but we need to keep up the good work!

Check out the video and keep watching the website and Council's Facebook page across coming months for more updates and waste tips.

Troupe, take a bow

Congratulations to Torquay Theatre Troupe members on what sounds like another great production hitting the stage.

The thriller *Strangers On A Train* got great opening night reviews and I'm really looking forward to seeing it myself.

I love live theatre and the way it takes you out of yourself. The Torquay troupe always lives up to its great reputation.

Make sure you get along to see *Strangers On A Train* this month. Tickets are available via trybooking.com. Visit the troupe's website for more information www.ttt.org.au.

Drivers beware

I've been hearing reports of increasing numbers of kangaroos around some of our roads, so drivers – please be cautious.

They are often attracted by nice picks of grass on road verges, and of course things can unravel very quickly if they are suddenly on the move and you are caught unaware behind the wheel.

Take care, vigilance counts, and the message applies on the fringes of our urban centres as well as further afield across the shire.


Budget submissions

This is your last reminder to make sure you view Surf Coast Shire Council's draft budget and let us know what you think.

It is available for viewing at www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/budget and submissions close at 4pm next **Thursday 24 May**.

Submissions can be made through the website, emailed to info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au or mailed to PO Box 350, Torquay, 3228.

Kind regards,



David Bell, Mayor
Surf Coast Shire

Geelong Theatre news and events

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Christine Davey
Admin · 20 May 2017

This week I saw two startlingly different theatrical offerings. The first was Dracula, from Queensland's Shaken, Not Stirred Theatre Company. The second, The Laramie Project by the Torquay Theatre Troupe. While one contained all the bells and whistles of an expensive, shiny, professional, touring production, the other was pure story-telling, with no bells and whistles required. Sure, Dracula was dazzling. After all, it had a revolving set, spooky lighting, and sound effects that coincided with actors crawling up walls. I was, however, left with the feeling that I'd been duped – that the production was attempting to pay homage to its cinematic counterpart to such a degree, that as a piece of theatre it had lost its way - became some clunky hybrid between theatre and film and therefore nothing much at all. The soundscape did not stop. Ever. There was no moment of pause, or silence. No time for audience members to breathe in the points of resonance, or contemplate the action they had just witnessed. The performance was rushed, actors often inaudible, and although all other costumes were period, Dracula arrived in London in full leather, Billy Idolesque ensemble. He may have been on his way to a white wedding, but it just seemed silly. In stark contrast, The Laramie Project was simple, subtle and moving. The cast of 12 created an interweaving narrative through solid, well-constructed moments. A sparse set and representative costuming allowed the audience to concentrate on the story and nothing but the story. Two strategically positioned TV monitors provided sharp, poignant visual reminders of what was happening on stage. This beautiful, haunting and hideous tale of the death of a young gay man in Wyoming was told with truth and dignity by a group of dedicated actors who never once stepped beyond the bounds of their remit or shirked their duties – work as a team, provide the experience, let the words and emotions speak for themselves. The production exemplified the power of theatre – a power that comes from knowing exactly what theatre is and what it can be. Congratulations to all involved. Christine Davey.



Christine Davey shared a post.



Admin · 18 May 2017

A fabulous review for TTT. Can't wait to see The Laramie Project.



Torquay Theatre Troupe

18 May 2017

Laramie challenges and impresses
Review by Gail Chrisfield.

The Laramie Project, Torquay Theatre Troupe's latest production, is a play that asks much of its talented cast and even more of audience members.

Some may find the true events inspiring the play challenging, the views expressed on stage confronting or the revolving door of characters confusing. Ultimately however, the play is deeply moving and as relevant as ever in these times of renewed bigotry and fear.

Set in the small American town of Laramie, Wyoming, at the end of the 1990s, the three-act play explores the devastating impacts of a sickening hate crime on the community. What emerges provides an insight into the potential consequences of being unable or unwilling to accept our individual differences.

Developed by Moises Kaufman and members of New York's Tectonic Theater Project, the play uses a docu-drama structure. This draws on a series of interviews the group conducted with real town folk, members' journal entries, media reports, court transcripts and the like.

The troupe's fine production honours its originators' intentions. Under Zina Carman's sensitive and intelligent direction, the 12-member assemble cast skilfully pulls off 60 different characters. The ease with which they transition from one to the next – with a flick of a scarf, a voice change or a gesture – is truly impressive.

Hats off to those on stage: Michael Baker, Glen Barton, Dianne Buttigieg, Cat Crowe, Michael Lambkin, Kathryn O'Neill, Rob Pow, Fred Preston, Sindi Renea, Terry Roseburgh, Carleen Thoernberg and Lachie Vivian-Taylor; and to the troupers behind the scenes.

The Laramie Project might not resonate with everyone but it deserves to be seen. The troupe is to be commended for bringing it to Surf Coast audiences – and for 'telling it right'.



www.ttt.org.au



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5 out of 5 Stars



Helen Gibbins — **5★** What a sensationally impressive performance tonight from the cast of 'When Dad Married Fury'. Am very much looking forward to the TTT 2018 season.

6 months ago



Sylvia Gray — **5★** Without a doubt, the best performance of The Laramie Project I've seen. Outstanding job by all. Impossible to pick a favourite moment or actor. The minimalist approach c...

1 year ago



Rose Hodge — **5★** Fabulous production and acting!! Great work TTT !

6 months ago

From: **Bigpond1** <lavenderhill@bigpond.com>

Date: Fri, Mar 28, 2014 at 5:41 PM

Subject: From Bryan Eaton

To: Gay Bell <gbell@iprimus.com.au>, Maryanne Doolan <maryanne.doolan@gmail.com>

Surf Coast Council,

As President of Geelong Repertory Theatre Company, one of the oldest Repertory Companies in Australia, I have been following with a great deal of interest the efforts of the Torquay Theatre Troupe (TTT) to establish a dedicated Arts Centre in Torquay. It may come as a surprise that I, the President of a relatively near-by theatre company, which some might see as a competing entity, would give his full support to achieve this goal. There are a number of reasons why I support the concept wholeheartedly.

1. Since the founding of the TTT, I and many others have been most impressed with the dedication of TTT members, the significant local interest the troupe has created and importantly, the quality of the performances they present. **Clearly a significant proportion of the Torquay population are interested in live local theatre that is readily accessible and inexpensive.** Indeed I know that a significant number of Geelong Repertory members, myself included, who make the trip to Torquay to see TTT performances. Such Repertory members leave Torquay amazed at the

tenacity of TTT members who often have to remove the set from its place in the Senior Citizen's Hall to make way for another activity the following morning and reconstruct the set for the following evening's performance.

2. My observations of theatre in the Geelong area over the past 30 years lead me state unequivocally that **drama groups without a 'home' almost invariably fall by the wayside**. It becomes just too difficult to store props, make sets, rehearse and perform in spaces 'owned' by other organisations. In fact as a theatre group gains popularity and the number of patrons grows (as I have observed with the TTT), the need for a 'home' increases, not only because of the accumulated set and prop material that has to be stored somewhere, but because increased popularity brings increased membership and the expectation that the group will perform larger and more sophisticated programs.
3. **A theatrical 'home' with appropriate facilities attracts local people**. This is particularly important when we consider the younger members of the Torquay community. At Geelong Repertory over the past few years we have made an effort to include in our 5 play/year program some plays which require young people and we have never been disappointed in either the response we get from local kids who think they might like to give theatre a go, either as actors, musicians, set builders or crew or the quality of their input. Indeed some of the most memorable performances I have seen at Geelong Rep in recent years have involved actors ranging from their teens to their eighties, working together to create live theatre. This process engenders tolerance and social wellbeing of the individuals concerned.
4. On the subject of young people, **I think the Surf Coast shire has a unique opportunity to create or facilitate the creation of a venue that could be used not only by TTT, but also by the community and particularly by local school students interested in the arts**. The Potato Shed in Drysdale is an example of this concept. It is used heavily by local students interested in theatre, music and dance and has a 'black box' space that is used as a theatre. However, to my mind the overall design of the complex falls somewhat short of being a quality space to present a range of plays in different genres. On a personal note, I am struck by the fact that as I drive home after a rehearsal or a performance at our theatre (Woodbin Theatre, Coronation Street) on a Friday or Saturday night and observed young people on stage and working behind the set, I see others milling around night clubs. Such an observation confirms for me the need to provide facilities and opportunities for young people to explore their interests.
5. Torquay has an international reputation because of the popularity of surfing. I can personally attest to this because, although we live in Ocean Grove, we have hosted over a number of years, a German family who come to Australia specifically to watch the Bell's Beach classic. **I think this is an opportune time to recognize that physical pursuits in this community are not encouraged to the detriment of local artistic endeavours and to do so internationally**. Performers are attracted to venues where there are facilities and I think it entirely feasible that Torquay could well attract artists in the fields of music, drama, comedy, dance to come to Torquay to perform. This benefits not only the local residents, but also attracts more visitors to the area.

If required I would be delighted to provide further information to support the effort by the TTT to create a dedicated space for the Arts in Torquay, encompassing not only theatre arts, but also dance, music and visual arts.

Yours sincerely,

Bryan Eaton PhD
President
Geelong Repertory Theatre Company

Drop Of A Hat Productions, Geelong

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webpage entertainmentgeelong.com



March 25, 2014

From: Colin Mockett
co-founder/director Drop Of A Hat Productions

To: Surf Coast Shire

Hello

This is in support of Torquay Theatre Troupe's proposal to establish a performance , arts and culture centre (theatre) in Torquay.

The surprise, as far as our company is concerned, is that one does not exist already - as the area is such a vibrant hub of rich culture.

I'm aware that there is so much more to Torquay than the popular surfing and socialising scene, having personally performed in fundraising music and humour concerts in the Uniting Church hall - to a full and appreciative turn-up - and also attended many excellent TTT plays in their makeshift theatre at the Price St Senior Citizens Centre.

I can also understand that Torquay's younger performers might balk at appearing - or even attending - this venue.

If Torquay were to have a purpose-built performance facility, I can foresee our company performing regularly there. (We currently provide the Morning Showtime concert series for the City Of Greater Geelong, as well as performing at festivals and events from Canberra to Adelaide).

And I'm, sure we would not be alone, for without doubt most touring theatre and concert companies would welcome the chance to add a Torquay booking to their tours.

I could also see the venue nurturing the performing arts in Torquay itself - just as CoGG's Potato Shed venue (a 10-year-old purpose-built theatre/arts complex built between two schools, available to both as well as the community) has done to Drysdale.

The CoGG Potato Shed is today our region's busiest performance/arts centre with an average of four performances every week of the year.

I need hardly point out that Drysdale has a population of 3,700 - while Torquay's is approaching double that.

I am happy to make myself available to consult/speak/propose/submit on the proposal - and can point to any number of Geelong artists and theatre companies that would join me.

Only, please - Act On It!

Regards

Colin Mockett

Colin Mockett
Drop Of A Hat Productions Geelong

EXTRACT letter of support from Colin Mockett, writer of 'That's Entertainment' website that covers theatre in Geelong. He reviews all the plays by amateur theatre around Geelong

A PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE WOULD BENEFIT TORQUAY AND SURF COAST COMMUNITIES BY:

Providing a focus for a growing number of residents who are interested in creating theatre, music, dance and other artistic and cultural activities.

Providing an opportunity for local residents to be exposed to live theatrical experiences. Many people are introduced to the wonder of theatre through local productions that are inexpensive and easily accessible.

Catering for the needs of local school students with an interest in the performing arts. An arts centre would provide a high quality venue for them to pursue such an interest locally.

Providing a venue that would attract younger people to the theatre (both as audience members and participants/performers). Although it is possible to stage productions at the Senior Citizens' hall, the venue is not conducive of appealing to younger people with a passion for the arts.

Providing a purpose-built venue in which a wide variety of musical and theatrical performances could be presented by diverse groups within the community.

Catering to all ages and many different talents. Theatre is a community within a community, as is a sporting club, a service club or a religious group. It encourages community engagement, cooperation, commitment, skill development, confidence, leadership skills, tolerance and achievement. In turn, these things contribute to the mental health and social wellbeing of individuals, and of the wider community.

Attracting a variety of artists and performers in the fields of music, drama, comedy, dance to come to Torquay to perform. This benefits not only the local residents, but also attracts more visitors to the area. Performers go where there are facilities and at the moment many smaller communities with quality arts facilities are reaping benefits that Torquay is currently missing out on.

Providing a venue for screening movies which would provide entertainment for locals and for the many holiday makers that come to Torquay in the summer. This would help to keep them and the entertainment money they wish to spend in Torquay.

Demonstrating that Surf Coast Shire acknowledges the importance of art and culture in a community and community engagement through these pursuits, just as sporting facilities and jogging paths demonstrate the importance of physical fitness and community engagement through sport.

Providing new forms of infrastructure to cater for a wide variety of interests enjoyed by a rapidly expanding and diversifying population. All members of the community will have an opportunity to develop their particular talents and enjoy the wellbeing that comes from being involved in a group.

Encouraging collaboration and co-operation between various cultural groups within the community.

Creating a facility that Torquay can be proud of, and that could also attract further funding and philanthropic support. Any commitment that is made by council to support and fund this project will have significant value added by other forms of funding and support.

5 Della Avenue,
Aireys Inlet, 3231
Victoria

24th March, 2014
To Whom It May Concern

As a local playwright, would be artist, music lover, and general theatre 'groupie', I am writing to support the development of a dedicated arts centre in Torquay.

This is something the area needs now more than ever: with the increased population that comes with Torquay's future building boom, it is important that the community is provided with the facilities which will inevitably bring people *together*. A venue which encourages the creative spirit in us all, which assists in the telling of stories, be it through theatre, music or the visual artists, should not be seen as a luxury but as an essential component to a healthy and vibrant community.

Theatre, with its emphasis on story telling, stage production, acting, directing, and general mateship, lends itself to a natural blending of all ages and backgrounds. A venue such as this would also provide the basic training for many future vocations, enabling young people their first experience as for example stage designer, carpenter, sound or lighting manager, art gallery curator or band manager, in a safe and nurturing environment.

Since moving to the area seven years ago, I have found the Torquay Troupe to be particularly encouraging and supportive of local writing. They have held regular play readings, and always provide one with positive constructive feedback.

Their shows are always of a high standard, and their slate is always varied and designed to appeal to a large cross section of the community. As a result many are booked out long in advance of opening night. Their ever expanding numbers is testament to the Troupe's dedication and energy. While other amateur regional theatre groups are closing down as they become less relevant to the younger generation, this theatre company is actually expanding, taking in younger members enthusiastic to become part of their ongoing success. All this done against the odds, within the confines of the local Senior Citizens Hall.

I have no doubt that, given a venue more in keeping with their needs and aspirations, the Troupes numbers would increase again, and possibly even expand in ways not yet even contemplated, lending itself to future collaborations with local musicians and artists.

Naturally the venue could also allow for film screenings. Film festivals, film making classes, documentary making, script writing classes for both stage and screen would inevitably, with the right encouragement and assistance, follow.

On this note, I would also emphasise the importance of making this as accessible as possible to everyone – that is, a true *COMMUNITY* venue. This would mean allowing it to be used at a 'not for profit' hire rate. The cost of hiring most theatre venues in Geelong for example are so high no local group or small production team can afford to perform there. As a result these venues are now used almost exclusively for visiting theatre companies, left empty for the months between, of no use to the community for which they were built, begging the question: what is the point of a council investing in such a venue if it's not put to good use by the people who helped pay for it in the first place? The very people for whom it was supposedly designed and built?

Like many others, I'm excited at the prospect of a dedicated arts community venue being built in Torquay. I believe your townsfolk have the energy and enthusiasm to more than reward the Surfcoast City Council for its belief in them. With careful and informed planning and the right intention, it could become a vital cornerstone in making Torquay a thriving artistic community, on a par or even superior to Geelong itself.

Yours Sincerely,

Sandy Fairthorne

92 Karamarra Rd
Gherang
Vic 3240
P:0402 249192
E: janetbrown.m@hotmail.com
19 March 2014

Dear Surf Coast Shire Mayor and Councillors,

The Torquay Theatre Troupe (TTT) have been lobbying for some time for a performing and visual arts centre in Torquay, and this letter is an attachment to yet another submission they aim to present to Council on April 8th 2014. As an playwright and theatre-maker who lives in the SurfCoast Shire, I write to support their submission, and affirm the reasons they propose that validates the need for a dedicated arts venue in the Shire .

SurfCoast Shire is a wonderful place to live, work, holiday, play, raise families, retire to and, or course, enjoy the beauty of our natural surrounds. There is a vibrant arts community in the Shire, with festivals and exhibitions and shows in various venues and locations. These are well promoted and assisted by the Shire's Arts Officer Julie Dyer whose enthusiasm and help must be acknowledged.

However, SurfCoast Shire is a fast growing community, and Torquay as the central town of the Shire, desperately needs a dedicated arts venue. As a playwright, I am involved with many theatre companies, local and beyond, and am very aware of the difficulties of presenting theatre in this Shire. It is almost impossible to set up a show for one performance, then 'knock it down' to enable another use of the premises the following day, then re-install that show on stage and arrange the venue for an audience for the subsequent performance the next night. It is a ridiculous and inefficient way to operate, yet these are some of the constraints to performance seasons in the Shire, where theatre groups use venues like the Senior Citizen Hall in Torquay and the Anglesea Community Hall in MacMillan St.

Artists and art audiences who live in and visit the SurfCoast Shire would relish having a dedicated premise: somewhere that they would know there would always be an exhibition on, news of shows, performances, readings, workshops, dance, circus arts, music, films... the opportunities for support, involvement, and use of the facility are enormous. Artists presenting their work from within the Shire, and artists presenting their work from beyond the shire: having a venue is the key to developing and sustaining an exciting, dynamic arts sector.

I would draw Council's attention to the Geelong Courthouse arts precinct – the space is occupied by Back To Back Theatre, CourtHouse Youth Arts, a gallery and a café: there's always something of interest going on there, and being promoted there. Such a symbiotic space has many purposes for artists: I meet people there for coffee to discuss projects; visit for performances by independent theatre groups; enjoy viewing the latest exhibition in the gallery space; last year their Sunday music afternoons in the theatre called "In Conversation with..." teamed an established musician with an emerging talent. So... I loved hearing Linda and Vikka Bull talk about their lives and experiences and sing together, and subsequently went to Melbourne to see Vikka in the Etta James Story, because she had spoken about her preparations for the show . Without a venue, you certainly don't have these opportunities. A facility like this in Torquay would be fantastic.

Once a venue is available, the possibilities of how to use it are exponential. Artists know lots of other artists. Ideas and inspiration are generated wherever artists can get together. Artists work very hard, have fun and make some amazing projects. But we need suitable – not 'make' do' - venues in which to develop and present our work.

Interestingly, Bendigo City Council have been in the news this week announcing how its new emphasis on 'the arts' has been extremely prosperous, received enthusiastically, and enticed tourists to that city. Smaller towns like Castlemaine and Daylesford actively promote the arts and have dedicated venues for live shows and exhibitions. Positioning the arts as an important part of community life shows a maturity in those Councils and I would urge Surf Coast Council to recognize that our community would benefit greatly from making such a venue available.

Last year I visited the Aaron Islands, off the coast of County Clare, near Galway, Ireland. There on the windswept island of Inisheer, with a population of about 250 people, is a dedicated community Arts Centre. I found it invigorating to see traditional arts being made by artists in studios there, a cinema, and plans for a film festival the following weekend. In most cultures throughout the world, it is expected that art in its many guises and practices is simply a part of community life, and dedicated arts venues abound even in the smallest towns and villages. It also illuminated to me that in the Shire where I live, for some very odd reason, the need for a dedicated arts venue has not been acknowledged. It's about time it was. I urge you all to support the Torquay Theatre Troupe's proposal and commit to providing this community with a dedicated arts venue.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Brown



THE **TORQUAY**
FROTH & BUBBLE
LITERARY FESTIVAL

To The Mayor and Councillors

Surf Coast Shire Council
PO Box 350
Torquay Vic 3228

Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone,
Kindness in another's trouble,
Courage in your own.
Adam Lindsay Gordon

For the next council meeting.

LACK OF AN ARTS COMPLEX IN TORQUAY

I am submitting a proposal to Council that the council, together with the citizens of Torquay, should investigate ways to build an Arts Complex in Torquay that would have a fully equipped modern auditorium and at least four meeting rooms with all of the facilities to conduct presentations. There should also be a café with adequate seating.

Our Torquay Froth and Bubble Literary Festival is now preparing for our fourth year in Torquay and are very grateful to the Surf Coast Shire for the way that the Shire is going out of its way to help us make a success of our annual venture.

In filling in the applications to various government bodies for money to run the festival, I have to answer the question each time, "Where is the festival going to be held. Where will be the venue?"

This year we held our first successful festival because of the generosity of the Torquay College Council, and we have written to them in the hope that we can use the facilities at the college next year.

Some of the grant applications ask me "How many visitors will your project bring in to Torquay?" I could answer by saying, "if we can't get a suitable venue, there will be no festival and no tourists visiting Torquay."

I notice that The City of Great Geelong has "The Potato Shed" and a description reads: ***The Potato Shed provides a vibrant arts complex that serves as a multi-purpose arts and cultural centre for joint use by Bellarine Secondary College, St Ignatius College and the regional community.***

If there is a plan for another school in Torquay, could the council please give consideration to adding an adequate Arts Complex to that school, funded for use by the Torquay community?

Yours Faithfully

John Adams

18th July 2010

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Kevin Harrington. I have acted in many television dramas- Underbelly, Neighbours, Dr Blake, being some recent ones. One of my favourites was Seachange which I'm sure you'll fondly remember as it was set in your region. I met a fan in Ballarat recently who had moved there from Perth and the first place he wanted to visit in Victoria was Ocean Grove. He will spend money on accommodation, souvenirs, and meals. Also, he may fall in love with the place and buy property there instead of Ballarat.

I cite this as an example of the PR value of drama in regional Australia. I have had the privilege of travelling around regional and capital cities three times with Australian plays and have seen firsthand, the benefits of arts centres to the communities in which they have been built.

I know buildings are expensive. And I know theatres are very expensive buildings. But they are an investment which will bring returns beyond their cost.

Here are some examples of how.

Meeting points. There are many lonely people in any community of a range of ages and ethnicities. The chance to get out of the house, meet like-minded neighbours, smile, chat, laugh and maybe shed a tear during and after a performance, stimulates people, lifts their spirits, keeps them healthy. They may become motivated to get up on stage themselves or take up some other artistic pursuit. This saves the community money in health care!

Inspiration for your young people. School kids and other groups of young people are often bussed in to performances at the local theatre. Occasionally actors conduct a forum or even a workshop with such groups and you can see the wheels within their brains begin to turn. You can hear and see their creativity growing. You can feel hope forming where once there was negativity. They get a chance, through the experience of meeting adults who were once just as aimless as them, to replace frustration with learning and applying artistic skills. Instead of damaging something or themselves they become productive. This saves the community money in health care and maintenance!

Cultural capital. Search this on Wikipedia. In layman's terms it relates to value, real value added to the human beings in a community. They are more educated, wiser, more sensitive, more creative through what they experience, what they learn and most importantly do in their new arts centre. A by-product of the building of cultural capital is the creation of capital. Smarter, more inspired citizens earn more money and spend that money in the community. Thus making the community richer in every way.

Money. Arts centres which are well run make money directly as well as indirectly for a community. Through ticket sales, programs, drinks, food. Professional artists who perform in arts centres buy accommodation, meals, beers, wine, food, clothes, and beers in the community they are performing in. And they buy beers. The Torquay pub will double in value! Audiences from surrounding areas will visit more regularly and spend money. Holiday makers, will have something extra to spend their money on. And instead of tipping it into the pokies or buying junk food, they will accidentally be feeding their souls. Which brings me to my last point.

Australian culture. My passion and my privilege over the last thirty years has been the telling of Australian stories. We are swamped by the product dumping of American culture in our market place. To see Australian faces, hear Australian voices telling Australian stories to Australian audiences is important. It's fundamentally important to nurture and pass on our outlook, our philosophy and our humour. If we don't it will die. I know you will empathise. I hope you will seize this opportunity to give Australians the chance to celebrate our culture in your community for the lifetimes of your children and your grandchildren.

I wish you wisdom and inspiration as you grapple with this big and important decision

Kevin Harrington, actor and teacher.

12. CONTACT

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