

Small Cultural Facilities Review

An exploration of ways in which Wellington Shire Council can better support communities undertaking cultural activities through small cultural facilities.



Part 1: The Findings
Part 2: Cultural Mapping

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Part 1: The Findings

Executive Summary

“Some people see art as something you really don’t need, as a luxury. But really you do: it is food for the soul, it is food for the mind and it is something that is essential for our wellbeing in these small towns.”

Briagolong Mechanics Institute Committee of Management member on the role of arts in small towns

Culture is recognised as one of the pillars underpinning Wellington Shire Council’s 2030 vision. We have moved beyond the need to argue the value of culture in community life; that is accepted and understood. The opportunity presented in this review is how Council might work towards sustainable cultural development into the future.

Sustainable cultural development is analogous to planting a seed in fertile ground. Providing structured and well planned support to communities undertaking cultural activities through these small cultural facilities provides an opportunity to support and extend that infrastructure, thereby providing the fertile ground in which the arts can flourish.

“There is an amazing wealth of talent in our region, covering the entire spectrum of cultural activities. Across all spheres, talented, committed advocates, practitioners, professionals and volunteers work tirelessly within their communities..... The human and organisational infrastructure that sustains this level of activity must be supported to develop and extend its capacities if the full potential for cultural development and expression is to be realised.”

Supporting documentation to Council’s Cultural Development Policy (September 2007)

This report is a research document for use by Council. It is both a survey of current local arts and cultural interests and an identification of community needs and aspirations, as they relate to small cultural facilities. The purpose of this review is to explore ways in which Council can better support communities undertaking cultural activities through small cultural facilities.

In this context, ‘small cultural facilities’ refers to the public halls, museums and other facilities that are resourced in some manner by Council. It does not cover Level 1 facilities such as Esso BHP Billiton Wellington Entertainment Centre (EBBWEC) or the Gippsland Art Gallery, nor does it refer to sporting facilities. It covers 51 small facilities spread across Wellington Shire and looks at issues of cultural service provision: as such it is not concerned with maintenance, repairs, land or ‘bricks and mortar’ issues. I have, however, referenced such issues when they have a significant effect on cultural service provision. The term ‘cultural activities’ refers here to arts and heritage related culture, such as performing, visual and literary arts.

The facilities covered here play varied yet vital roles in the cultural development of Wellington's communities. These are places where community and regional culture is celebrated; the grass roots expression of the vibrancy and diversity of our communities. Hall committees have traditionally held a position of 'custodian' of their assets, ensuring that the facility is kept in good repair and is available to the community for its use. Many hall committees remain very clearly within those defined boundaries, while others have gradually taken on an additional cultural and community development role in response to an identified need in their communities.

In some small communities (such as Airly) there is no town but there is a hall – that is the only place where the community can come together on neutral ground. In those circumstances a hall is critical in the fabric of the community. Others play a large part in shaping the cultural future of their community; Briagolong is an example of this where the strongly creative character of that community is reflected through the halls activities, the hall committee in turn actively seeks new opportunities for cultural development. Another example is the Regent Theatre in Yarram, which is helping to make Yarram an important cultural tourism destination through providing a range of entertainment that cannot be found in any other venue this side of Melbourne.

“... in a community not everyone is comfortable in each other's homes and if you say “Let's all go to my house” and someone up the road doesn't really enjoy it at your house then you feel like you are excluding them. Whereas if you can say “Everyone's coming to the hall, bring new friends, bring your nanna, bring your relatives from England” it means that people network in a different way. They network in a community oriented way.”

Airly Clydebank Hall Committee of Management member on the role of a hall in a community with no town

This Review consists of three parts: The Findings, Cultural Mapping and The Interviews.

In **Part 1: The Findings**, a range of scoping options provide direction and guidance for future growth and development as Council moves through its current restructure and towards its 2030 vision. Scoping options cover:

1. **Direct financial support.** Options include:
 - Reviewing the current categorisation system
 - Financial assistance for cultural activity
2. **Support for committees of management and volunteers.** Options include:
 - A structured program of professional development
 - Assistance with promotion
3. **Strategies to encourage greater cultural activity.** Options include:
 - A comprehensive online halls register
 - A small touring circuit
 - An equipment pool for use by halls

In **Part 2: Cultural Mapping**, information is presented on 10 distinct geographic districts within the Shire, based on geography and community usage patterns. It presents information on each region including: community access to cultural facilities and activities; art, craft, heritage and cultural groups; community, sporting and educational infrastructure, and service groups. Information is then provided on each facility including who owns and manages it, the amount of financial subsidy it receives from Council, and a comparison between arts and non-arts activity.

Nine facilities are also presented as in-depth case studies, with much information drawn from intensive interviews held with the management committee or other stakeholder. The case studies represent a range of cultural and operational situations.

Part 3: The Interviews contains the raw data sourced from in-depth structured conversations with selected stakeholders. This will be made available to Councillors and senior Council staff.

The suggestions contained in this review are based on thorough research combined with my observations and experience. The consultation process behind this review has generated much interest in the community and could be a valuable resource for all stakeholders.

*Deb Milligan
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Regional Arts Victoria, in partnership with Wellington Shire Council.*

Methodology

Purpose

This review is a research document for use into the future. Its purpose is to enable informed decision making around Councils ability to support communities undertaking cultural activities through small cultural facilities, in order to better serve the needs of the community into the future. It comes from a recognition within Council that more could be done in this area.

Methodology

The Review is both a survey of current local arts and cultural interests and an identification of community needs and aspirations, as they relate to small cultural facilities. To this end a variety of consultation methods have been employed.

The Hall Usage Data provided to Council for 2007, 08 & 09 was used to identify patterns in arts and non-arts activity. In order to calculate this information in a manner useful for this report I re-classified each activity into the following categories:

Arts: Visual (inc sculpture & textiles)	Non-arts: Meeting
Arts: Literature	Non-arts: Training
Arts: Theatre	Non-arts: Forum / information provision
Arts: Dance	Non-arts: Exercise classes
Arts: Music	Non-arts: Sports related
Arts: Film	Non-arts: Catering
Arts: Craft	Non-arts: Market
Arts: Forum / information provision	Non-arts: Weddings, Funerals, Functions
Arts: Heritage & Culture	Non-arts - polling station
Arts: Other	Non-arts: Other

This enabled identification of areas on which to concentrate and develop into cases studies. I conducted interviews exploring their activities, operations and hopes for the future. The groups were chosen in order to provide a good cross section of facilities taking into account; size, management model, range and type of cultural activities, community context and geography. These interviews were based on the 'Structured conversations' method. In these interviews we discussed:

- Current arts and cultural activity
- How this relates to community need
- Whether they are income generating or not
- Non-arts activities, and how this relates to community need
- Management structure
- Volunteer base
- Income stream
- Cultural context
- What makes their community unique
- Evidence of changing community needs

- Networks and support
- Future vision
- Enablers and obstacles
- How they could be better supported by community / Council / networks.

More detail on this process can be found in *Part 3: The Interviews*.

Further research was conducted through the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Affairs and community websites. I also sourced Community Plans developed by the Community Reference Groups (CRGs) and consulted with key staff in Council, Regional Arts Victoria and other stakeholders as below.

Cultural Facilities

There are 51 cultural facilities which come under the scope of this project:

Airly-Clydebank Public Hall, Binginwarri Public Hall, Boisdale Public Hall, Briagolong Mechanics Institute, Bundalaguah-Myrtlebank Public Hall, Carrajung Hall, Carrajung South Hall, Cobains Public Hall, Coongulla Community Centre, Cowwarr Public Hall, Dargo Public Hall, Denison Public Hall, Devon North Public Hall, Giffard West Public Hall, Glenmaggie Public Hall, Golden Beach Community Centre, Gormandale Mechanics Institute, Heyfield Memorial Hall, Kilmany Public Hall, Licola Hall, Loch Sport Public Hall, Longford Public Hall, Mack's Creek Public Hall, Maffra Memorial Hall, Mann's Beach Public Hall, Meerlieu Public Hall, Munro Public Hall, Nambrok Public Hall, Newry Public Hall, Port Albert Mechanics Institute, Regent Theatre (Yarram), Rosedale Mechanics Hall, Sale Memorial Hall, Seaspray Public Hall, Seaton Hall, St John's Ambulance Hall (Sale), Stacey's Bridge Public Hall, Stradbroke Public Hall, Stratford Mechanics Hall, Tinamba Public Hall, Valencia Soldiers Memorial Hall, Willung Hall, Won Wron Public Hall, Wonyip Hall, Woodside Hall, Yarram Mechanics Hall, Maffra Beet Museum, Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum, Yarram Courthouse Gallery, Sale Museum, Tarraville Living History Museum.

Forty of these halls have an Agreement with Council (Licence & Service Agreement, Funding Agreement or Service Agreement). The remainder are either not classified under the Level Categorisation system (ie museums) and/or have not entered into an Agreement.

Stakeholders

WSC Cultural Services Unit	Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale Advisory Group
WSC Property Unit	Cultural Facilities and their Committees of Management
WSC Community Strengthening Unit	Regional Arts Victoria (RAV)
WSC Bushfire Recovery Team	Users and interested community members
WSC Healthy Lifestyles Unit	Community Plans, developed by
EBBWEC staff	Community Reference Groups (CRG)
EBBWEC Advisory Group	
Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale staff	

The Review was guided by the following Terms of Reference, passed by Council in June 2009

Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Small Cultural Facilities Review* is to enable informed decision making around Councils ability to support communities undertaking cultural activities through small cultural facilities, in order to better serve the needs of the community into the future. This will take the form of:

- A stakeholder consultation
- An audit of small cultural facilities
- A report to council

PARAMETERS

Whilst the term 'cultural facilities' can include facilities such as: libraries, theatres, EBBWEC, art galleries, public halls, museums, sporting clubrooms and more, in the context of this project, 'small cultural facilities' refers to the public halls, museums and other facilities that are resourced in some manner by Wellington Shire Council as listed below.

It is also important to note the distinction between the 'bricks and mortar' aspect of these facilities, and the provision of cultural services through these facilities. This review is concerned with service provision only, and is not looking at maintenance, repairs, land or other issues related to 'bricks and mortar'.

Likewise, the term 'cultural services' can refer to a broad definition of culture including sporting and recreational services. In the context of this review, cultural services refers solely to arts & heritage related culture, such as performing, visual and literary arts.

METHODOLOGY

Following the Sporting and Recreational Infrastructure Review, in 2008 Council requested a Cultural Facilities Review also be prepared for the municipality.

The review shall entail:

- Mapping of cultural services/activity provided through, or centering around, small cultural facilities
- Mapping of other relevant community cultural activity
- Identification of gaps and opportunities for activities/services that could be supported through the facilities
- A basic audit of small cultural facilities
- Identification of ways in which council can support cultural services/activity provided through small cultural facilities

The review shall be carried out by RADO Deb Milligan with assistance as required from Managers, staff and Councilors of WSC and staff at Regional Arts Victoria.

Cultural Facilities

The cultural facilities which come under the scope of this project are:

Halls:

Airly-Clydebank, Binginwarri, Boisdale, Briagolong Mechanics Institute, Bundalaguah, Carrajung, Carrajung South, Cobains, Coongulla Community Centre, Cowwarr, Dargo, Denison, Devon North, Giffard West, Glenmaggie, Golden Beach Community Centre, Gormandale Mechanics Institute, Gwen Webb Arts Activity Centre, Heyfield, Kilmany, Loch Sport, Longford, Mack's Creek, Maffra, Mann's Beach, Meerlieu, Munro, Nambrok, Port Albert Mechanics Institute, Prince St Reserve (Old School Building), Regent Theatre (Yarram), Rosedale, Sale Memorial Hall, Sale Temperance Hall, Seaspray, Seaton, St John's Ambulance Hall (Sale), Stacey's Bridge, Stradbroke, Stratford, Tinamba, Valencia Soldiers Memorial Hall, Willung, Won Wron, Woodside, Yarram Mechanics Hall.

Other Cultural Facilities:

Maffra Beet Museum, Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum, The Courthouse Gallery (Yarram), Rosedale Historical Society, Sale Museum, Stratford Historical Society, Tarraville Living History Museum.

Consultation tools

The consultation shall be carried out using a range of tools, such as: key interviews, surveys, focus groups, forums and workshops to gather information and ideas.

Timeline

23 Feb 2009	Initial meeting with Mayor, Director, Manager Cultural Services Unit and Manager, Creative Communities, RAV
21 April	Council briefing
June – Sept	Consultation / Audit
Sept – Nov	Compilation of Audit and development of Report
Dec / Jan	Provide Audit and Report to Council

Communication Channels

Updates in quarterly WSC Managers Report

Notification of public consultation meetings in councillors fortnightly newsletter / diary
Council briefings

Meetings with Deb Milligan, Steven Dickson, Stephen Dempsey, Council representative and Susan Strano (RAV) as appropriate

STAKEHOLDERS

Wellington Shire Council

Cultural Services Unit

Property Unit

Community Strengthening Unit
Economic Development Unit
Healthy Lifestyles Unit

Cultural Facilities

Public Halls and their Committees of Management
Historical Societies and their Committees of Management
Museums and their Committees of Management
Regent Theatre and its Committee of Management
Courthouse Gallery and its Committee of Management
EBBWEC staff
EBBWEC Advisory Group
Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale staff
Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale Advisory Group

Users and interested community members

Facility users, ie dance school, Lions, Rotary, artists etc
Community Representative Groups and Community Plans
Other community members

AUDIT OF SMALL CULTURAL FACILITIES

The audit is both a survey of current local arts and cultural interests and an identification of community needs and aspirations, as they relate to small cultural facilities. Where possible it will also include basic information on the technical specifications of the facilities and an indication of their capacity to present shows or events. A range of consultation tools will be used, determined by the purpose of each stage in the review – Fact Finding, Consultation and Visioning. There will be overlap between the stages.

Fact Finding: This information will be gathered largely by survey or research

- General demographics
- Proximity of the town/community to other cultural facilities, resources and opportunities (ie cinema, art gallery, community house, performance venue, sporting club rooms, strong arts groups, existing festivals, pavilions, school halls etc)
- The ways in which Council is currently engaged in arts and culture service provision in that community
- How the facility is currently supported by Council – financial, in kind or other

Consultation: This information will be gathered largely through key interviews, surveys and forums

- Elements contributing to the unique ‘character’ of that community
- The range of arts and cultural activities in which the community is engaged
- The range of arts and cultural activities provided by, or through, the cultural facility
- Which activities bring in income, which need subsidising etc
- Any major issues in the community that impact on the cultural facilities

- Any major issues in the community that impact on the cultural facilities
- Identification of changing needs / usage if evident
- Examples of some of the wider services provided by the facility, ie childcare, rotary, bridge club etc
- Specific issues relating to the facility and their ability to serve the community (ie training, management etc)
- The resources required for the facility to carry out their current activities (financial and other)
- Identification of basic venue technical specifications where relevant
- What is their relationship to Council (formal and informal)
- The management model of the facility
- A skills audit of committees of management

Visioning: This will be gathered largely through workshops, focus groups and key interviews

- Community vision (wish list) for delivery of cultural services within their community
- What is desirable but unavailable in cultural service delivery within that community
- The resources that might be needed to develop arts and cultural activities through the facility
- How Council may be able to support the community in this area in the short, medium and long term

REPORT

The Report aims to compile this information into a manner that will assist the Councillors in decision making. It will take the form of:

- Executive Summary
- Breakdown of consultation participants
- Locality based presentation of findings
- An analysis of findings
- A hierarchy of needs analysis
- Case studies of four facilities (yet to be determined) providing a snapshot of a range of community needs and models of provision
- A range of recommendations from the Manager, Cultural Services Unit

June 2009

Existing support

Wellington Shire Council currently provides support for small cultural facilities through programs and personnel, including the following.

1. Building Audit Program

Under this program funding is allocated on a priority and needs basis for maintenance to Shire facilities. Once a year an audit is carried out for most WSC owned facilities, including Recreation Reserves and other facilities not covered by this review. From this a Facility Fault Report is generated along with an estimated cost. This is sent to the committee along with a letter offering funding according to the type of Agreement held. If the facility has a Funding or Service Agreement then Council offer to cover roughly 50% of the cost. The facility then fills in a Maintenance Program Funding Application requesting an amount and showing their contribution: they can include in-kind support in their calculations. Once all requests are taken into account Council then notify each facility of the amount they can be allocated. There is an annual budget of approximately \$230,000 to cover all shire owned/managed facilities, including ones not covered by this review.

Financial support is also put aside for particular categories of facility, for example there is approximately \$10,000 reserved for other maintenance required by Museums.

2. Community Grants Program

The Community Grants Program has two streams: Community Facilities, and Community Programs, with \$100,000 per annum in each stream. Funds are provided on a dollar for dollar basis, with the applicants being able to provide in-kind contributions. There is one program round in July/August each year.

Community Facilities

The Community Facilities stream tends to receive some applications from small cultural facilities, generally for one off maintenance related projects such as landscaping, installing water tanks, fencing and signage. There are processes in place to ensure there is no inappropriate cross-over with the Building Audit Program. It is open to all facilities, not just the ones covered in this review.

Community Programs

The Community Program stream tends to cover training and community education programs such as first aid courses, training referees or surf lifesavers. It is rare to receive an application from a small cultural facility for a program. Occasionally there are applications from hall users but this is not common. There have also been a couple of arts related projects in this stream but this is also not common. Recent ones include the Shakespeare Festival for puppetry workshops, Foothills Family Music for a music camp, and the Yarram Courthouse for a bushfire related exhibition.

The Community Grants Program is administered by the Administration Officer and the Community Facilitator in the Community Wellbeing Unit. The Administration Officer assists

community members with their applications, which are then sent to the relevant CRGs. Summaries of all applications are also sent to all CRGs. Two representatives from each CRG then work together to prioritise the applications and these recommendations are presented to Council in a briefing session. Following this a recommendation goes to a Council meeting.

At one stage the program was split into more categories including an Arts and Culture stream. At that time the system was found to be too time consuming to administer and was abandoned four or five years ago. The present system is currently being reviewed to ensure appropriate diversity and understanding in the CRG representation as it has been noted that there is room for improvement here.

3. The Events Grants Program

There are two streams within this program: Events Small Grants and Events Sponsorship. There are two categories within the Events Sponsorship stream: Community Events, and Major Events. In-kind support is also available through advice and equipment loans

Event Small Grants

These can be applied for at any time, and are for amounts of up to \$500. Events Small Grants are assessed on: community involvement; community outcomes; innovation and best practise; and event management capacity. Some examples of the type of activities which could be funded include: marketing expenses; recruiting and training volunteers to help deliver the event; implementation of event best practises such as introducing waste wise and accessible events; creating new program elements for the event; conducting market research or an event evaluation; payment of venue/facility hire expenses.

Event Sponsorships Grants

Events Sponsorship Grants are assessed twice per year. Criteria may change from year to year to reflect Council priorities. Council seeks to achieve specific outcomes from Event Sponsorship. These outcomes include community development, economic outcomes and the establishment of strategic partnerships and opportunities.

Community Event Sponsorship Grants are for events that are primarily staged to bring the community together and to celebrate specific aspects of their culture or identity. Amounts up to \$5,000 are available. The aim is to cultivate and support the development of community events across the Shire which will improve the quality of life within the Wellington Shire.

Major Events Sponsorship Grants are for a repeat event that attracts, or has the potential to attract, significant visitor numbers and/or media coverage, and creates an economic benefit in Wellington. Amounts of up to \$10,000 are available. The aim of the Major Event Sponsorship is to provide support to events which have a demonstrated capacity to bring significant economic outcomes to Wellington. Generally, events with less than 2000 patrons on any one day are not eligible to apply for major events sponsorship. This tends to make them less likely to be suitable for the facilities covered in this review.

There is the opportunity to develop an Arts & Culture Grant Program to complement the existing grants programs. It can be designed to relieve some of the current pressure on the CRGs, whilst ensuring sound and appropriate arts assessment processes. This is explored in the Scoping Options section.

4. Personnel

During interviews, many of the committee members expressed great appreciation for the support they have received from personnel in these positions: it is highly valued. A number of these positions are currently in transition to assist Council's alignment with its 2030 vision.

Community Planner

Previously known as the 'Community Facilitator', this position is based in Community Wellbeing and works with CRG members. It should be noted that not all of the committees currently access that position, due to only some towns having CRGs.

Coordinator of Community Committees

Previously known as 'Coordinator: Committees of Management', this position was based in the Property Unit and as such had a focus on the 'bricks and mortar' aspect. At the time of writing the review this position is being transferred to the Healthy Lifestyles Unit and its scope broadened to encompass a more holistic focus and a broader range of Committees of Management, ie those of Neighbourhood Houses.

Events and Grants Coordinator

Previously known as 'Events Coordinator', this position remains based in the Healthy Lifestyles Unit. Its main focus was on Events, most of which tend to be sporting events. At the time of writing this review, the position is in transition and looks likely to have a wider brief and include responsibility for Events and Community Grants.

GippSport

The GippSport position is based in Healthy Lifestyles and also has some intersection with suggested actions, whilst maintaining its focus on sport and recreation.

Tourism Development & Marketing Officer

The Tourism Development & Marketing Officer is based in the Economic Development and Tourism Unit and works particularly closely with the facilities in Yarram. This position is the Shire's Creative Gippsland representative and is often involved in arts events.

Regional Arts Development Officer

The Regional Arts Development Officer is employed by RAV and works in partnership with WSC. The position works with community members on specific arts and cultural activities, or through providing arts funding advice, project management advice, promotion of activities and brokering relationships, as well as working with the Creative Gippsland team. Whilst that position is in partnership with WSC, its scope is limited through not being fully within the Council hierarchy with its subsequent access to resources, finances and authority. The RADO position also has a much wider focus than Wellington alone and works strategically across all of Gippsland. This position was based in the Cultural Liveability Unit and is moving to the Community Wellbeing Unit.

The Policy Environment

The Policy Environment section has been provided by Stephen Dempsey, Manager of the Arts and Culture Unit.

This section summarises the policy context relating to facilities such as public halls, including past policymaking and widely distributed papers. Factors in this environment may have an influence on the Shire's decision-making, such as the enhanced focus on Council's commitment to liveability and the growing emphasis on partnerships with community groups.

Wellington 2030 Strategic Vision

These facilities all have a strong part to play in achieving the Shire's 2030 vision across many of the identified key themes:

1. Economy:

Market Wellington as a quality lifestyle and tourism destination.

Many cultural facilities play an active part in assisting the Shire to work towards this vision, i.e., Briagolong Hall and its Film Festival, Entertainment Centre in Sale, Yarram's Courthouse Gallery and Regent Theatre.

2. Population:

This strategy underpins other themes of the Council Plan, through the use of 'deliberate strategies to attract and retain more young families and young people while continuing to value the contributions of our older residents'.

All public halls have a powerful part to play in achieving this vision: retaining a sense of community and providing venues for local pursuits, i.e., school drama plays and as a community meeting point,

Enhance the liveability of the Shire specifically for young people through support for the improvement and expansion of ... education and ... entertainment and cultural activities.

Notable example includes Heyfield Public Hall's links with East Gippsland TAFE outreach services, many halls with activities, e.g. Valencia Creek Hall.

3. Development:

Support communities to attain a sustainable level of local infrastructure reflecting the needs of communities. Specific examples include Airly Hall and Yarram's Regent Theatre, but this applies to most public halls.

4. Wellbeing and Safety:

Support community initiatives that promote participation and working together.

Can work towards this strategy through supporting community volunteers and Committees of Management more proactively. Community life revolves around the district's public halls, they can be a place for social interaction by people of all ages, creating a strong sense of community connectedness.

6. Culture:

The vision for Wellington is as a vibrant, inclusive and creative community that promotes, values and celebrates its culture and heritage:

Promote and support events and initiatives that celebrate our culture and community;

Many of the halls and small cultural facilities covered in this review are the bedrock of cultural activity in their communities. They are uniquely placed to reflect and respond to the needs of their communities.

Foster and support a broad range of arts programs and activities;

Supporting the facilities and their Committees of Management,, both financially and in a capacity building manner will be evident in both community and cultural liveability.

Strengthening the committees through capacity building, networking, training, and succession planning is vital for their sustainability.

Build community capacity and encourage participation in cultural development;

Examples include the Airly community valuing their hall for its capability to hold regular community events and as a central gathering place. The Regent Theatre hosts eisteddfods, arts festivals, and acts as a venue for cinema nights and dances.

Recognise and protect our historic buildings and landmarks.

Halls are a cornerstone of participation and engagement with the arts. Through greater financial and practical support for these facilities, the Shire can work towards this vision and its underpinning strategies.

7. Liveability:

Improve the quality and accessibility of our open space and community facilities.

This impacts on the creation of a sense of place, inclusiveness, and the vibrancy and diversity of our communities. Many districts have a significant population and can be a distance from similar facilities in towns elsewhere.

Develop our sports and recreation infrastructure

Halls are commonly used for dances, indoor sports, film nights, etc. In some communities without a town the public hall is the central or only commonly accessible facility available.

Encourage enhanced retail, hospitality and entertainment opportunities

A geographic spread of halls across the municipality enables the provision of a range of cultural and entertainment events and give the population an opportunity to mix amongst others in their locality.

The 2030 Vision is available at:

http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Files/Wellington_2030_FINAL.pdf

Council Plan 2009 - 2013

This Plan is accessible from:

http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Files/Council_Plan_FINAL_2009_2013.pdf

Cultural Policy - 3.3.2, Nov 2009

The purpose of this policy is to establish a long term vision and principles to guide future planning for cultural development, and foster the dynamic expression of culture within Wellington Shire. In support of cultural development Council is to encourage a wide involvement of people in the cultural life of their communities and recognise the diversity of cultural activities, people and regions, and access needs. Council supports initiatives that are directly relevant to local communities and their culture, assets and heritage. The Cultural Development Policy is on the Council website (the supporting documentation is not online).

Council Provision of Recreational/Cultural Facilities - 3.4.1, Nov 2009

It states that Council will provide, as deemed necessary, training to committees of management to assist with management and programming for Level 2 facilities. Defines tiered support levels 1, 2 & 3. It prescribes the mechanisms for funding of operational maintenance of this infrastructure. However, review of operating subsidies for infrastructure revealed that there was no direct link between the subsidies provided by Council and the costs associated in maintaining the facilities at the standard consistent with their hierarchy ranking. As a result, there are a number of inequities identified in the current Council funding of maintenance of sporting infrastructure. This is similarly the case with public halls and other cultural facilities. This policy is currently under review. Whilst not yet adopted as Council policy the Sporting Infrastructure Development Plan / Sporting Infrastructure Facility Hierarchy Strategy has much in common with the aims of the Small Cultural Facilities Review. Consistent plans and treatment of all community facilities would therefore be appropriate. It documents Council provision to recreational/cultural facilities and divides amenities into four categories. It includes public halls, galleries and other cultural facilities within the tiered hierarchy, based on a need for strategic compromise between infrastructure demand and supply throughout the Shire. Within the hierarchy, the optimal usage patterns of these facilities will generally involve multi-use by a variety of activities, age and gender.

- Level 1 – regional, state significance facilities. {e.g. EBBWEC}. These facilities have, or have the potential, to provide for state, regional or shire wide events on a reasonably regular basis; and provide a range of cultural and/or recreational opportunities.
- Level 2 – district significance facilities. {e.g. Sale, Maffra, Yarram, Rosedale, Stratford, Heyfield halls}. These facilities do, or could, provide for district or shire wide events on a reasonably regular basis and provide a range of cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Level 3 – local significance facilities. {e.g. Briagolong, Golden Beach halls}. These facilities provide for district events on a regular basis and provide limited cultural and/or recreational opportunities.
- Level 4 – local facilities. {e.g. Kilmany, Bundalaguah halls}. These facilities are provided for the general well-being of the community. They have no formal recreational or cultural facilities.

Heritage Policy - 3.1.2, Nov 2009

Council seeks to protect the most important aspects of the Shire's heritage, and to increase community appreciation of that heritage. This policy is relevant to certain public halls, e.g., Briagolong, Boisdale, Regent Theatre.

Community Grant Program - 3.2.1 Nov 2009

This policy provides assistance to community groups for a broad range of community development programs and activities. A key objective is to increase the range of and access to community programs and activities, in support of recreational, cultural and social development.

Events - 3.4.2, Nov 2009

Though focusing on events and festivals there is a connection with venues and public halls. Council actively supports and encourages the hosting of events within the municipality.

Asset Management - 4.2.1, Nov 2009

This policy guides delivery of Council's infrastructure assets and services in a structured and sustainable manner that recognises community expectations.

Committees - 4.4.1, Nov 2009

This policy relates to Council owned or controlled property, such as public halls, which have broad community use and are used for multi-purpose cultural, community or recreational purposes. This policy references the current three-tiered hierarchy.

All the referenced policies can be read in full at:

[http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Files/POLICY MANUAL - 1 DEC 2009.pdf](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Files/POLICY%20MANUAL%20-%201%20DEC%202009.pdf)

Tourism Industry Strategy, 2006-2011

This document is focused on regional tourism, plus marketing and promotion infrastructure for towns in the Shire. It notes the visitors who are keen to experience the arts, culture and heritage of this area, which are strengths of the Shire.

This strategy can be referenced at:

[http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Files/Tourism Strategy2006-2011.pdf](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Files/Tourism%20Strategy2006-2011.pdf)

Community Plans

Council has assisted communities to establish Community Representative Groups and to form Community Plans that captures the vision and hopes of the community, identifies key community priorities and suggests actions for addressing these priorities. Council continues to oversee the implementation of community plan priorities into the Shire's planning and policy development.

Community Plans can be viewed at:

[http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/page/Page.asp?Page Id=852&h=1](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/page/Page.asp?Page%20Id=852&h=1)

Scoping Options

These scoping options have been formulated through consultation with committees and stakeholders and my professional observation and experience. It is intended to present a synthesis of ideas and options designed to meet the needs of the range of facilities and the communities they serve. A range of recommendations could be drawn from this section for Council's consideration and to inform future planning towards sustainable cultural development and the support of cultural activities in small facilities.

The following section outlines a range of possible scoping directions. They fall into three broad categories:

- 1. Direct financial support**
- 2. Support for Committees of Management and volunteers**
- 3. Strategies to encourage greater cultural activity**

Some of these actions, if adopted, may impact on current policy or involve reviewing existing policies or procedures, for example the current hall level categorisation system. There are budgetary impacts inherent in other actions, for example the introduction of a new Arts and Culture Grants Program, or increasing the current Funding Agreement subsidy.

Others impact on human resource requirements and/or the current work priorities of Council employees. There is some intersection with existing positions, however much of the work outlined falls outside the parameters of those positions, due to the required emphasis on arts and cultural development and support from within the Council structure. This is a crucial aspect to consider if Council wish to better support communities undertaking cultural activities through small cultural facilities. The existing positions, and how they may intersect with these facilities, are outlined on p 15. There is a noteworthy gap in Council's service delivery in the area of arts and cultural development at a community level. I believe that a Community Arts Officer position, based in the Liveability directorate, would remedy this gap and would be able to drive a significant amount of the work outlined below.

1 Direct financial support

The scoping options in this category will have budgetary and policy impacts.

Many of the committees enjoy very generous in kind support from the wider communities however it should be recognised that, whilst this is a natural part of hall/community dynamics, it also results in local businesses or individuals being financially disadvantaged. For example, Stratford Hall saves many thousands of dollars due to the generous donation of committee members skills and expertise as tradespeople. That equates to thousands of dollars that is not going into the local economy. If the committee were able to pay local tradespeople for their time that money would be injected directly into the local economy, as happens at Maffra where the committee can sub contract work out to local businesses.

It is also clear that many committees are overstretched and have a limited reservoir of energy to put into presenting cultural activities. If the pressure to conduct regular fundraisers was

relieved, or if they were able to subcontract out small maintenance jobs, then they would be more able to use their time and energy to hold cultural or other activities – thereby helping to contribute to a more vibrant and active community.

“We’re very, very lucky; we’ve got workers ... A plumber, an electrician, and a real handy man, a joiner; cabinet maker ... So the expenses would have been a lot more if we hadn’t had those men working for us ... We’ve got about 14 or 15, and they’re all pretty good. You’ve only got to ask them.”

Stratford Mechanics Hall committee members talking about the tradespeople they call on to volunteer.

There are a number of points to note when looking at the financial support that Council provides to facilities:

1. The categorisation system works across both cultural and sporting facilities.
2. The financial support available to Level 3 facilities is to be used for administrative and management responsibilities and can be put to some operational costs such as utilities. It increases by a small percentage each year but does not keep up with utilities costs.
 - Facilities with a Funding Agreement (FA) receive \$546 per annum in the form of a Funding Agreement Subsidy (FAS).
 - Those with a Licence and Service Agreement (L&SA) receive \$650, minus a \$104 licence fee, resulting in a balance of \$546.
3. There is a significant difference in the financial support provided by Council to Level 3 and Level 2 facilities.
 - Level 3 receive a total of \$546 as stated above.
 - Level 2 facilities receive an additional Operational Subsidy (OS) to cover maintenance and operational costs. In three out of four cases this is more than \$35,000.
 - Level 2 subsidies also tend to increase by a small percentage per annum. In 2009 it increased by 1%, in 2008 it increased by 3%.
4. Whilst most Level 2 facilities receive more than \$35,000 under their Level 2 Operational Subsidy, Stratford Hall is distinctive in that it receives significantly less at \$5,530.
5. Longford Hall is classified as a level 3 facility but is in a unique position in that it receives a special subsidy on top of its Funding Agreement Subsidy. When applying for Level 2 status in 2009 it was not successful in becoming reclassified, instead it remains at Level 3 but receives a special subsidy of \$8,080. Note that this is a higher subsidy than that available for Stratford Hall as stated above. Note also that it covers the Recreation Reserve and the Community Centre at Longford.

“... I think that there is too big a discrepancy between the amount of money paid to the different levels of hall.”

Stratford Mechanics Institute Committee of Management member

The above points suggest there is an opportunity to either update the existing *Council provision of recreation / cultural facilities* policy, or develop a new policy to guide decisions regarding

categorisation and subsidy level for small cultural facilities. The relationship of these small cultural facilities within their communities, and the cultural dynamic which they support, is a complex business and not a case where 'one size (or indeed three levels) fits all'.

Taking the above points into consideration Council could consider the following four actions, which explore a range of ways to financially support facilities. These could be considered individually, in various combinations or as a basis to guide new policy development.

1.1 Review the Level categorisation system and related financial support

There are three main points to consider when looking at any restructure of the categorisation system.

1. The already noted difference in the financial support available for Level 3 and Level 2.
2. The range of facilities currently grouped in Level 3.
3. The anomalies already noted in the system, ie Longford Hall (Level 3) receiving \$8,080 and Stratford Hall (Level 2) receiving \$5,530.

One way to deal with this, and to cater for future developments, could be to establish another level between Levels 2 & 3, creating four in total. Level 3 facilities would be those that are less likely to reach Level 2 status, but are significantly above the current Level 3 definition – being highly active and significant within their community, or district. Possible inclusions would need to be assessed more thoroughly but could include: Longford Hall, Stratford Hall, Golden Beach Community Centre, Briagolong Hall, Heyfield Hall, the Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum and the Yarram Courthouse Gallery. There is a strong argument for providing a greater level of financial support to those facilities. It could be argued that both Stratford and Longford halls are currently occupying this new position. Note also that some of those listed facilities (such as Heyfield and Briagolong) may be able to achieve current Level 2 status if they chose to and any new categorisation system should not prevent them from doing so.

"I think the thing that has to be pointed out is that this isn't the Committee's hall. It's the Shire's hall and the Shire should be making a more significant contribution towards its maintenance."

Heyfield Memorial Hall committee of Management member

1.2 Increase the Level 3 Funding Agreement Subsidy

The base level of Funding Agreement / Licence and Service Agreement Subsidy (FA/L&SA), at the equivalent of \$546 pa, does not rise in line with utilities and other relevant cost increases, and currently lags far behind. When asked, one small facility estimated that their utilities costs were around \$4,000 per annum. Council could consider raising this base rate subsidy to \$1,000 or \$1,500 pa. For the sake of expediency it has been referred to as \$1,000 in the following table. The exact amount would need to be determined based on further research and real measures and a calculation of average utility costs.

Please refer to the table on page 26 for an alternative model that could provide financial support as described in 1.1 and 1.2. Whilst the figures are estimates on my part and require

further research and calculation, it appears that these suggestions could be put in place for an additional \$60,000. Note that, of the 51 facilities included in this review, only 40 fit into the current categorisation system and so are able to be included in the table.

1.3 Financial support for cultural activities undertaken through facilities

This would be in addition to any Operational Subsidy and would be able to support events initiated and/or run by the committee in response to community need, or ongoing cultural services provided by facilities which are not covered by the existing categorisation system (such as the Museums and the Courthouse Gallery).

There are two main administrative options to explore, both of which would need further refining.

1. Develop a new Arts & Culture Grants Program to complement the existing programs

This option would be a useful addition to the model outlined in 1.1 and would be able to support all community members undertaking cultural activity – not solely those happening through the facilities. It would necessitate increasing the amount of money currently available to the overall grants programs. The best model for this would be one which could tie in with the existing Community and Events Grants processes without adding to the administrative burden and modelled on current best practice in arts funding. The following suggestions is based on the Federal Regional Arts Fund process:

- One round per year, in line with the Community Grants. The RADO position could assist potential applicants with applications. Funds of \$2 - \$5k provided on a dollar for dollar basis, with the applicants being able to provide in kind contributions.
- Assessed by a suitably qualified panel of 6 - 8 who are chosen for their arts and Community Cultural Development (CCD) experience: encompassing a range of art forms and geographic spread. For example this could be made up of: RADO, CRG representative, visual arts representative, performing arts representative, Venue Network representative and a CCD representative. Panel members would be retained for 2 - 3 rounds to gather experience and finetune the process.
- Panel initially score applications based on criteria. The aggregated score is then used as a starting point for discussions in a face to face meeting.
- The recommendations are then slip-streamed back into the Community Grants process and are presented to Council in the same manner.
- Council could start by making an extra \$10 - 20k available to this in the first year, increasing as budget cycles allow.

2. Provide a Cultural Activities Subsidy: This option would be a useful approach if the model outlined in 1.1 is not pursued. It would involve an amount that is allocated to the facility along with the existing subsidies and is a way of providing money for cultural activities in small cultural facilities which would not impact on decision making for small recreational facilities. There are two proposals for ways in which to determine the amount.

- a. A pre-determined amount based on a sliding scale which takes into account the *proportion* of arts and cultural activities in the facilities activity mix, as well as the

number of arts and cultural events and the percentage turnout of the total community. This would help ensure it would take into account the *value of each hall to their community and the role they play in the cultural dynamic* of their community, rather than serving only the biggest and busiest halls. A formula could be established which calculates the amount based on the previous year's statistics and other relevant factors. This approach would assist facilities such as the Yarram Courthouse Gallery and the Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum which do not actually have a 'level' rating but provide ongoing cultural services. It also takes into account the fact that the provision of cultural activities is not always in the form of individual events such as can be catered for through the Community Grants scheme, as well as the fact that a small hall providing occasional cultural events for isolated communities has a value that is not readily quantifiable and is easily overlooked if considered on a numerical basis only. Examples of halls trying to provide for their communities in this way include Airly and Golden Beach. This approach would take some consideration to implement but would then be simple, and financially predictable, to maintain. It also keeps cultural service provision separate from operational matters and so shouldn't impact on the recreation reserves.

- b. Alternatively, facilities could go through an application process each year based on a plan of coming events, which is then acquitted at year's end. Different amounts would be available to access according to the hall level, but could also be available to the other cultural facilities such as the Courthouse Gallery and the museums as noted above. This system could be time consuming to implement.

1.4 Financial support for the Regent Theatre Managerial position

In the past Council has paid for a Shire employee to act as Manager of the Regent Theatre. There are a range of available explanations regarding the transition from that position to the current situation where the committee employ a part time Manager, as there also are for the circumstances which lead to the difficult financial position in which the Regent Theatre found itself recently. It is not the place of this review to discuss any of those potential explanations: rather it is more useful to look at the current situation and explore options to maximise the future potential of this facility – for the Shire, for the community and for the management committee.

There are some important points to note here:

- The Regent Theatre is unique – both within the range of facilities covered by this review, and as a venue in south-eastern Victoria – and as such should be viewed independently in this context.
 - It is a singular facility in south eastern Victoria, often being the only suitable venue for certain acts and events this side of Melbourne. It has a 560 seat capacity (up to 700 when the downstairs seats are removed) which is significantly larger than that of EBBWEC (close to 400). 320 seats are in the dress circle and the rest on the ground floor.

- The ground floor seats can be removed which enables the delivery of a wide range of events and services: large rock concerts, small music concerts, cinema, dances, theatre, conferences, art shows etc.
- The theatre adds to the community and cultural fabric of Yarram in a way which no other small facility in Wellington does. In that context the Regent is more comparable to EBBWEC than to, for example, Maffra or Sale Halls.
- The facility brings significant economic and tourism stimulus to the region, drawing people from Melbourne and the entire Gippsland region to the town.
- A facility of this size and nature cannot operate effectively without a Manager.
- Yarram itself is distinctive in that it is significantly isolated whilst still being a large regional centre. It has a population of 1,715 (2,105 in the district).
- The current model of a Manager employed by the Committee has proven to work better in this community, than one with a Manager employed by Council. The main problem with this model is the financial strain which this places on the committee.
- Any loss of the facility would be a blow, not only to the community's social and cultural wellbeing, but to the region's economy and the tourism industry.
- The committee has gone through comprehensive procedural and accountability changes over the last 12 months and is now in a very stable position.
- For financial reasons the Manager's paid time has been significantly reduced over the last year to a point where the Manager provides substantial volunteer time whilst many tasks still cannot be carried out. This is untenable – both for the Manager and for the facility – and if continued could lead to the demise of the facility.

A financial subsidy would be required to cover the wages of a Manager in a 20 hour per week position. Please refer to the Case Study on page 85 and related transcriptions in *Part 3: The Interviews*.

“It’s hard because we are not a hall as such and we have everything else that goes along with having an old picture theatre. So it is unique in that area. And that’s where I think people are struggling – particularly at the Shire – with the fact that we have this uniqueness. They wonder how to treat us, because we are unique, we are not just a hall.”

“Because we have such a large amount of usage in this area, we need to have somebody there on a regular basis to be able to facilitate this and manage it. And that’s why we’ve been asking for assistance. Because of that and the amount of community work that has been done.”

Regent Theatre Committee of Management members

Current Level	Current definition	Current \$	Alternate Level	Alternate definition	Alternate proposal
Level 1 EBBWEC	These facilities have, or have the potential, to generate sufficient revenue to be substantially self funding; which do, or could, provide for State, Regional or Shire wide events on a reasonably regular basis; and provide a range of cultural and/or recreational opportunities.		1	As is	As is.
Level 2	These facilities do not have the capacity to generate sufficient revenue to be substantially self-funding. These facilities do, or could, provide for district or Shire wide events on a reasonably regular basis and provide a range of cultural and/or recreational opportunities.	\$650 L&SA Plus \$5,530 - \$37,370 OS Currently 4 facilities (Regent, Sale, Maffra, Stratford) = \$109,659	Level 2 3 facilities: Regent Theatre, Sale Memorial Hall, Maffra Hall	As is plus: They play a significant role in the cultural and/or recreational dynamic of their community and wider district.	\$1,000 L&SA Plus \$25,000 - \$40,000 OS Best guess total: \$100,000 (ie, Regent \$40k, Sale \$32k, Maffra \$28k)
Level 3	These facilities provide for local events on a reasonably regular basis and provide limited cultural and/or recreational opportunities. As such, these facilities are considered to be the primary responsibility of the local community to manage, maintain and operate	Approx \$546 / 650 FAS / L&SA Currently the remainder of facilities are in this category	Level 3 4 facilities: Stratford, Longford, Briagolong, Heyfield.	These facilities do not have the capacity to generate sufficient revenue to be substantially self-funding. These facilities provide for occasional district events and provide a range of cultural and/or recreational opportunities for their communities. They play a significant role in the cultural and/or recreational dynamic of their immediate community. At times they provide this for the wider district.	\$1,000 FAS / L&SA Plus \$15,000 OS Total: \$64,000
			Level 4 33 facilities	These facilities provide for local events on a reasonably regular basis and provide limited cultural and/or recreational opportunities. As such, these facilities are considered to be the primary responsibility of the local community to manage, maintain and operate.	\$1,000 FAS / L&SA Total: \$34,000
Total		21 L&SA @ \$650 = \$13,650 (levels 2 & 3) 19 SA & FA @ \$546 = \$10,374 (level 3) + Longford hall @ \$8,080 + Level 2 OS @ \$109,659 Total = \$141,763			Total = \$198,000 Plus access to Arts and Cultural Grants program

NB: Of the 51 facilities covered in this review, only 40 fit into the current categorisation system and so are able to be included in this table.

2 Support for Committees of Management and volunteers

The scoping options in this category have implications for Council staff profiles or workloads, as well as some budgetary considerations.

2.1 Develop a structured program of professional development

Council support is vital for these committees and volunteers. It is worth recognising the crucial community building role that these committees play, rather than seeing their work mainly through a compliance prism. Many committees are overstretched, under-resourced and have very real concerns about succession. A common concern repeated through many of the interviews, was the need for new committee members to step forward from the ranks of volunteers. The committees are in danger of burning out and have fears about succession. There is an opportunity here for Council to explore ways to support them further. If being on a committee is not seen as such an onerous task then it may become easier to recruit new members.

“We usually go away in the winter, so it’s much quieter. If we were going away for three or four months we wouldn’t be going in the summer. Not again.”

Stratford Mechanics Institute committee member on how committee responsibilities impacts on their lives

“... in the times I’ve been on the committee, I’ve gone through times when there has been very low interest from the community – to the point that they were tossing up what to do with the hall!”

Valencia Creek Hall Committee of Management member on the ebb and flow of community engagement

Some members are putting in extreme hours ensuring the community are able to access and enjoy these publicly owned facilities. Some members are skilled up with clear roles, while others are less so. The need has been identified for a program to be developed that will suit this range of committee and community development needs. It would require Council to drive it and cultivate an environment that encourages participation and development.

The program model could be based on quarterly forums with workshops or guest speakers delivering professional development and providing networking opportunities. It should be open to all Committees of Management and associated volunteers.

Areas of skill development could include:

- Event management – including the perspectives of performers, producers and audience, currently Council focus is largely on compliance requirements
- Information on Council processes such as level categorisation and insurance

- Supporting volunteers – including recruiting and keeping volunteers, as well as succession planning
- Presenting and managing exhibitions
- Promotion and marketing
- Grant writing and seeking funds
- Managing collections
- Strategic planning
- Governance
- Basic tech training.

This program would complement the Wellington Venues Network. There would also be an intersection with any potential arts and culture network. This program would be driven and delivered by Council and be open to all committee members as well other community members involved in this sector.

There are a number of resources and models which could be drawn on to support this action:

- Regional Arts Victoria drives and resources a similar model for arts workers in regional Victoria (the Regional Cultural Network).
- The RADO can help design the program and could deliver some of the training.
- Creative Volunteering No Limits (currently unfunded) is an accredited training program based on these needs. Regional Arts Australia is currently seeking re-funding for this program (to be renamed Smart in Business).
- Arts Management Advisory Group suite of workshops covers some of the topics.

2.2 Review Licence and Service Agreements

Hall committees have traditionally held a position of ‘custodian’ of the asset, ensuring that the facility is kept in good repair and is available to the community for its use. Many hall committees remain very clearly within those defined boundaries, while others have gradually taken on an additional cultural and community development role in response to an identified need in their communities. This now means that, if Council wishes to encourage a broader use of halls and enable safe, visionary and legal operations, it may need to revisit the current Licence and Service Agreements in order to ensure that hall committees are adequately covered for those activities under their insurance agreements with Council.

“The reality of what the Shire is trying to do is that they don’t want to be responsible for anything that takes place within the hall, they are saying “It’s the community’s hall, you have got to pay for it, you’ve got to maintain it and you’ve got to wear all the liability for it.”

Golden – Paradise Beach Community Centre Committee of Management member

2.3 Support of Wellington Venues Network and development of Venues Advisory Group

The Wellington Venues Network (WVN) was initiated, and is driven, by a cluster of halls including Heyfield, Sale, Stratford, Maffra, Yarram and Munro. There are actions Council can undertake to support the network, whilst ensuring that the halls retain 'ownership'. As it currently stands it is a very useful, informal, information sharing and support network. However, both current members and non-members have suggested that it could be beneficial if the network was open to all halls, if it was more structured, and if the aims of the network, meeting dates and similar information was more readily available¹.

"I think it's a wonderful idea, helps us to find out what's happening. Like I never knew some of the things that are happening. We never knew that Maffra got \$30,000. And we probably wouldn't have gone for our reclassification if we hadn't had those venue meetings. Because that's where it started from. Daryl came home and said that Maffra get \$30,000 and I said "Well, I'll ring up John and find out" so I rang up and he said "Oh, you do the work and we'll see" So we did the work and fortunately it was upgraded."

Stratford Mechanics Institute committee member on the value of the Wellington Venues Network

Council could play a useful administrative support role here through:

- Circulating minutes, handouts and agendas
- Advertising meeting times
- Helping to expand the membership base to cover all halls, and maintaining contact details
- Helping arrange for guest speakers if required.

There is also the potential to draw a Venues Advisory Group from the makeup of the network. This would provide the network with a voice to Council. It could operate in a similar manner to the EBBWEC Advisory Group.

"I am just aware that if we are wearing the big boots in town we have to step softly, and that is something that I think those meetings would be very beneficial in ensuring."

EBBWEC Manager

¹ Since this information was gathered the network has acted on this desire and expanded: 30 people attended the last WVN meeting with approximately six - seven new halls represented.

2.4 Assistance with promotion

Many of the hall committees have expressed a need for assistance with promotion of events – these events could be anything from major events to the regular cultural activities that they provide for communities, such as film nights, dances, art shows or music nights. If Council could find a way to offer greater avenues for promotion it is something that many of the halls would value highly.

The main listing on the shire website: *How can I advertise my event in the shire?* (see box) looks at this opportunity through a compliance prism, with a focus on containment rather than ways in which the Council can assist. In order to deal with this issue in a way which more fully benefits the community, Council could differentiate between full Council support and endorsement (with all the resultant OH&S requirements) or simply enabling communication channels for community benefit.

There are a number of ways in which this could be done:

- Establish a monthly arts & culture e-newsletter similar to those delivered by our neighbouring shires (Latrobe, East Gippsland and Baw Baw Shire have particularly good examples). This would have the added benefit of connecting our numerous active artists and community art groups across the shire. Any events run by small cultural facilities could be included in this, as well as other items such as funding opportunities, resources and other news.²
- There is an opportunity for some events to be listed on the Council website in the Calendar of Events. However, the Events Guide states that events need to be approved

How can I advertise my event in the shire?

Events should not be advertised until approval has been obtained from the Wellington Shire Council and other authorities.

Once events are approved and permission is given from the event organiser, they are added to the 'Calendar of Events' on the council's website. Event organisers are required to provide the necessary information via the [Event Application Form](#) and must update Wellington Shire Council's Coordinator Lifestyle Activities if there are any changes to the event details.

All portable advertising signs within the shire require a permit. Permits will only be issued where advertising does not introduce a hazard to road users or pedestrians, signs are secured, and the construction is appropriate. There are limitations on the times of display and the number of signs. Signs of an inappropriate nature are not permitted.

A person must not (without a permit) write, deface, place or affix any letter, figure, device, poster, sign or advertisement on any Council land or any building, fence or other property otherwise under the control of or vested in the Council unless otherwise permitted by law.

² Since compiling this information I have acted on this need and created a monthly e-newsletter, combining RADO news and Wellington Shire arts news.

prior to being included on the Events Calendar. To be approved they need to fill in an application form. Whilst not particularly onerous it is possibly an unnecessary level of bureaucracy for hall committees wishing to garner greater promotion for their event. If the Events Calendar is solely for Council sponsored and supported events then there does need to be a high level of control. However it could benefit many community organisers if this calendar could be used more broadly, ie as a general publicity tool for any event in the shire. Council could consider its aims in having an Event Calendar and explore whether there is the potential for committee members to upload their own listings onto the Calendar of Events – subject to a WSC moderator. A simple disclaimer may be all that is needed to enable this.³

- Provide for a regular listing of events run by hall committees in the local paper as part of the Wellington news.
- Provide assistance linking hall websites to the Council site, or assistance with establishing their websites if they don't exist. Also see the Halls Register strategy below.

“... I think mainly the Shire need to employ someone to promote cultural activities within the shire. And that's basically their job – to go around and help people promote stuff. Let's face it; it brings money into the shire. It might cost the Council, whatever, \$50,000 per year to do something and the benefit to the shire as a whole is half a million dollars! Well that's a big bonus for the shire.”

Briagolong Mechanics Institute Committee of Management member

3 Strategies to encourage greater cultural activity

The scoping options in this category have implications for Council staff profiles or workloads, as well as some budgetary considerations.

The Arts & Culture Grants Program described earlier would also work to encourage greater cultural activity.

3.1 Online Halls Register

Develop, maintain and promote an online, publicly accessible Halls Register, with details of capacity, floor plans, photos and contact details for all Public Halls. This would essentially be a significant expansion of the current 'Halls' listing on the Council website. The Register would ideally include two levels of content, depending on the needs of the facility and its community.

³ Since compiling this information, the Calendar of Events has become more accessible to communities wishing to list their events, although I believe that the same policy directives governing this are still in place.

1. Current contact information including postal and street addresses, phone and email. Basic hall layout with photographs, plus a description of amenities and common usage.
2. The above, plus tech specs, stage plans, floor plans, lighting plans and photographs, as well as contact and address information so that it can be used by potential presenters and performers, or to help establish a touring circuit (see 3.3 below). It could include links to accommodation information and maps for visitors, or presenters wishing to tour shows. Halls in this listing could then be eligible for more support in presenting shows as outlined in the points below.

The Register could be established and maintained by a Council officer through the Council website, under the 'Halls' listing, and could link to the Calendar of Events as above. It could also link to a Technicians Register (see 3.4 below) and a Scheduling Calendar (see 3.2).

Minimal committee contact details for most of the halls can currently be found publicly on the Community Directory (Internet) but this is an underutilised facility, with email contact provided for only six of these listings and none of the listings having web links to the halls, photos or other information about the facility. This listing is mainly used to provide meeting details, though these are not always available. Currently minimal contact details are also provided for the committees of 21 of the existing halls through the Community Directory (Intranet). Expanding this listing to a fully functional Halls Register would greatly assist the establishment of a small touring circuit.

3.2 Scheduling Calendar

Develop a Scheduling Calendar linked to the Calendar of Events, or rethink the Calendar of Events with this function in mind (see 2.4). This calendar could be updated by Council staff and representatives from the Wellington Venues Network, and could assist the community when planning the timing of their events. It would also be useful when developing a small touring circuit (see 3.3).

"I certainly think that the calendar with the dates of availabilities ... would help, both in terms of scheduling to make sure you are not clashing with other groups, but also to work out perhaps if there are availabilities. So you could see an opportunity to potentially take the show 50 kms down the road the following weekend."

EBBWEC staff

3.3 Establish and support a small touring circuit

Once the Halls Register is in place Council and the hall committees could work with RAV, EBBWEC and possibly the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC), to establish a small touring circuit for interested halls. This could greatly enrich the cultural life of small communities. The resources and processes needed to support this circuit might include:

- Assistance to halls conducting a self-audit, or conduct the audit for/with them

- Ongoing maintenance of Halls Register
- Promotion of the Halls Register to potential presenters
- Referral of potential presenters to halls via EBBWEC
- Provision of a pool of equipment and training in its use (see 3.4)
- Training in event management, marketing, supporting volunteers and similar through a program of professional development (see 2.1)
- Promotion of events and activities (see 2.4)
- Mentoring by EBBWEC (event management, artists contracts, hire agreements).

3.4 Pool of technical equipment

Purchase, maintain and administer a pool of basic equipment – lighting trees, risers, portable stages, basic sound – available for all halls that have a comprehensive listing in the Halls Register. This could be modelled on the Events Trailer with similar conditions and requirements placed on its loan. EBBWEC could also play a role in providing basic training in the use of the equipment. People who are subsequently trained in the use of this equipment could be included on a Technicians Register which can be linked to the Halls Register.

3.5 Taking cultural activity to isolated towns

Provide pro-active and targeted support for cultural activity and services in very isolated districts, such as Dargo and Licola, in order to stimulate cultural development in these regions. This is just one way in which these communities can be stimulated: it is much cheaper to invigorate and pro-actively support these small communities, rather than wait for their decline and the resultant gaps in tourism or medical emergency management for campers etc. Potentially once or twice a year, for a pre-set period of two to three years, Council could present a small show (music or theatre for example) in the hall. The objectives would be two-fold:

1. Being very isolated, these communities currently have no ready access to cultural services, and while the population is very small and a high level of service cannot be expected, they need not be completely culturally abandoned.
2. Processes, networks and training could be put in place to encourage a continuation of activities by community members after direct Council support is withdrawn.

3.6 Develop a community driven arts and culture strategy

Work towards an arts and culture strategy incorporating the above points (amongst others). This would draw on previous work carried out by the RADO position during the consultation for the Cultural Development Policy in 2007, as well as input from the Wellington Venues Network and any new arts and culture network. It could be developed on a community planning model and bring other agencies to the table such as RAV, VicHealth, Arts Access and AusDance.

“A lot of it is the fact that the work doesn’t let up, it’s continual. You can’t say – I’ll do this for a while, then I’ll go away and do something else.”

Yarram Courthouse Gallery Committee of Management member

4 Other

The scoping options in this category have budgetary or other implications. Some are already in-hand at the time of finalising this report.

4.1 Act on the relevant recommendations from the Dargo Design Framework

In 2004 - 2005, Council commissioned a comprehensive study - *The Dargo Design Framework* (DDF). The DDF employed a sound consultation process and resulted in a wide range of findings relating to community values. The report was accepted by Council in May 2005.

Some of the recommendations contained in there include:

- Retain the services offered and clearly provide signage and advice of services provided [through the hall].
- Improve the physical link [of the hall] to the core of town.

4.2 Explore the implications of differing land tenure across the small public halls

Some of the facilities covered in this review are on Council land, while others are on DSE land, resulting in a different relationship with Council and reduced access to its resources and support. These are all community facilities although there is a wide variance in the level of community usage across them. A need has been identified to explore this issue from a municipal perspective as well as an organisational perspective. One option could be to consider bringing all the DSE ones under Council's 'umbrella'. If that was the case then Council would need to explore how to manage that: one possibility could be to develop an Advisory Committee model for the DSE owned facilities.

4.3 Resolution of issues at Airly Hall

There are land ownership issues at Airly Hall which are preventing them from holding any activities. See *Part 3: The Interviews* for transcription. This is having a profoundly negative effect on community spirit and cohesiveness⁴.

"I hope the Shire recognises that someone needs to support small communities and make them feel like they are not dying, but that they are growing."

Airly Clydebank Hall Committee of Management member

⁴ At the time of finalising this report the issue is being resolved.

Suggested road-map

In brief, here is a suggestion of how some of the actions could link together to create a healthier, more vibrant collection of small cultural facilities. This 'road map' does not reference all suggestions contained within the Scoping Options: some of these could be explored further in any future Arts and Culture Strategy.

1. Increase the Level 3 Funding Agreement Subsidy
2. Review the current Level Categorisation system and incorporate a new category level
3. Develop an Arts & Culture Grant Program to streamline in with existing grant programs
4. Provide a financial subsidy to cover the wages of a part time Manager at the Regent Theatre
5. Develop a regular arts & culture newsletter which includes promotion of hall activities.
6. Develop and maintain a comprehensive, publicly accessible Halls Register
7. Explore the viability of a Community Arts Officer position who could then:
 8. Develop an Arts and Culture strategy
 9. Develop and drive a structured program of professional development
 10. Encourage expansion of the Wellington Venues Network and offer administrative assistance
 11. Develop a Venues Advisory Group drawn from the Wellington Venues Network
 12. Establish a small touring circuit

“You’ve got to put in the hard yards yourself. You’ve got to have community involvement and all that sort of thing. ... we’ve never had a great deal of trouble with the Shire; they really support us quite well. But there’s more they can do as in have a Cultural Officer and a Promotions Officer and that sort of thing. To help those that do want to run things and promote things. Because the local plumber, carpenter and builder can all get together and have a great idea, but they couldn’t put an art show on!”

Briagolong Mechanics Institute Committee of Management member

Part 2: Locality Based Cultural Mapping

Overview

Catchments

Depending on what manner in which you categorise them, there are 28 to 60 towns, communities or districts spread across Wellington Shire. Some of these might have a community and a hall, but no town. Others may have a hall but no community or town – they may be indicators of past communities. There are 51 small cultural facilities covered in this review, only 40 of which currently sit within the existing level categorisation system. Not all towns / communities in Wellington Shire are represented here – only those with a small cultural facility which falls within the scope of this review.

This cultural mapping component has been presented in a locality based format with towns and districts grouped together. These groupings are based on geography as well as generalised patterns of community usage and relationships, and assists to identify the range of cultural facilities available to specific communities.

Dargo & district:

Dargo.

Maffra & district:

Maffra, Stratford, Briagolong, Valencia Creek, Boisdale, Munro.

Heyfield & district

Heyfield, Newry, Tinamba, Glenmaggie, Cowwarr, Coongulla, Seaton, Nambrok, Denison.

Sale & district

Sale, Longford, Wurruk.

Sale outer northern district

Bundalaguah, Cobains, Airly/Clydebank, Kilmany, Meerlieu.

Sale outer southern district

Stradbroke, Seaspray, Golden Beach, Loch Sport.

Rosedale & district

Rosedale, Gormandale, Willung, Carrajung, Carrajung Sth.

Licola & district

Licola.

Yarram & district

Yarram, Port Albert, Devon North, Woodside.

Yarram & outer district

Wonyip, Stacey's Bridge, Bingenwarri, Won Wron, Mann's Beach, Macks Creek, Giffard West.

The section on each district provides information organised in the following manner:

- Towns
- General information & small demographic snapshot (from 2006 Census)
- Cultural facilities referenced in this review
- Other cultural and community facilities / infrastructure / activities specific to the town/community
- Other general information.

The standard information presented about each cultural facility is:

- Who owns and manages the facility
- Whether it is a level 2 or 3 facility and whether it has an existing Agreement with WSC
- The amount and type of financial subsidy, or other support, it receives from Council
- Skeleton statistical information based on the most recent Hall Usage Data held by Wellington Shire at the time of compiling the information. This references a comparison between arts and non-arts activity. Activity figures should be interpreted thoughtfully so as not to be misrepresented. For example, an event comprising 5 days usage (ie 2 days theatre performance + 3 days rehearsals) is counted as 5 events in this context. Note also that, due to the manner in which it has been gathered, an 'event' could refer equally to a one hour meeting, or a full day's use. Also take into account the fact that one event might as easily be catering for 200 people (at a film festival or concert), 25 people (at a painting or dance class) or 6 people (in a craft group). Not all facilities supply up-to-date data so there are gaps. Treat these figures as a guide only.

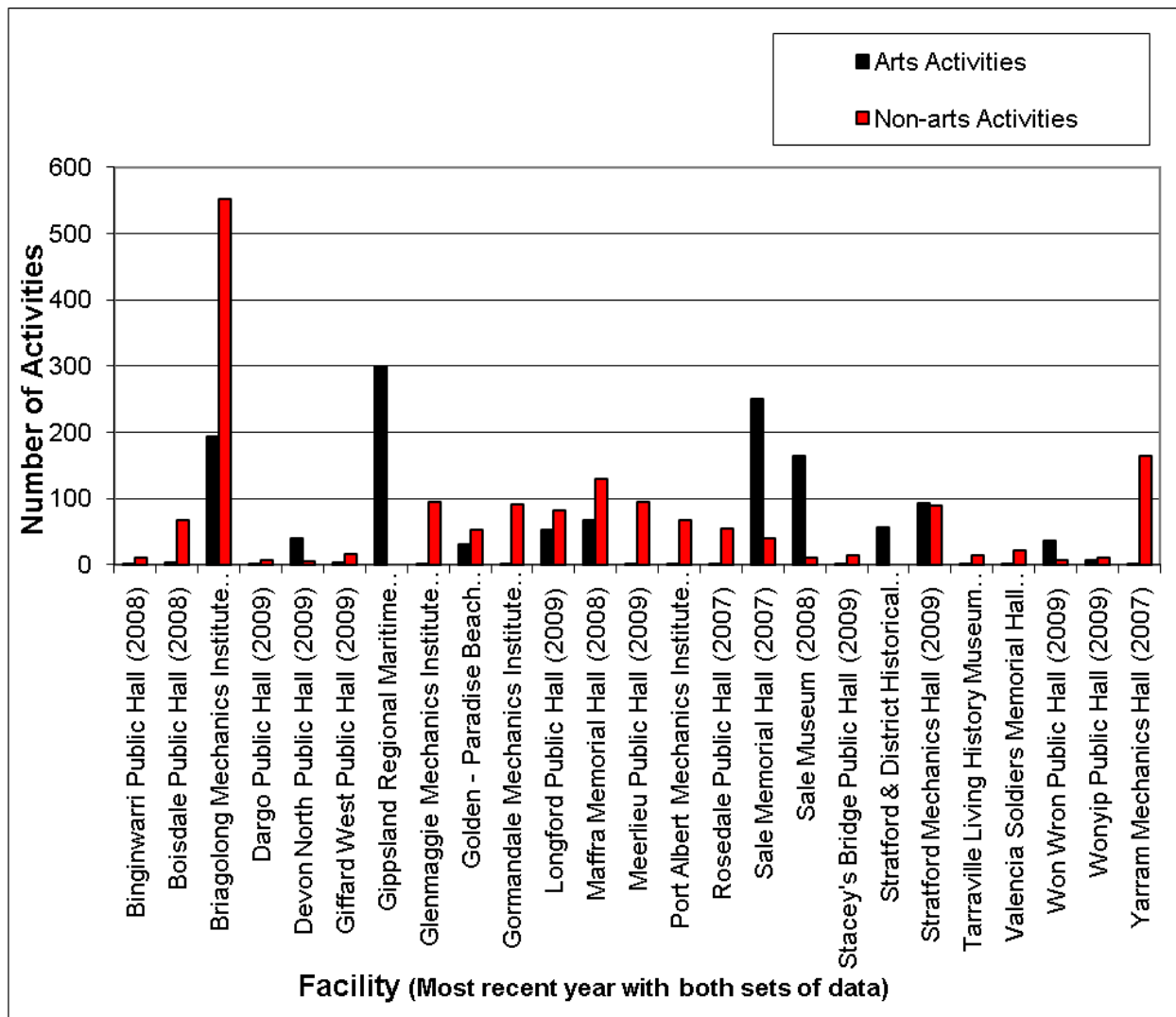
In addition, nine of the facilities are presented as Case Studies, with more detailed information. This has been informed by, amongst other sources, the structured conversations in *Part 3: The Interviews*.

The 'Other cultural and community infrastructure' section provides an overview of the types of activities and facilities connected with that town. Due to the large scope and evolving nature of this, it cannot be viewed as comprehensive: it is more beneficial to view it as a cultural mapping exercise – an indication of community interests and activity. The information is grouped under the following categories:

- Galleries, libraries, theatres, museums
- Community, educational and sporting infrastructure
- Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups
- Art related events or festivals
- Craft and related hobby groups or activities
- Sporting clubs
- Service and similar groups
- Other.

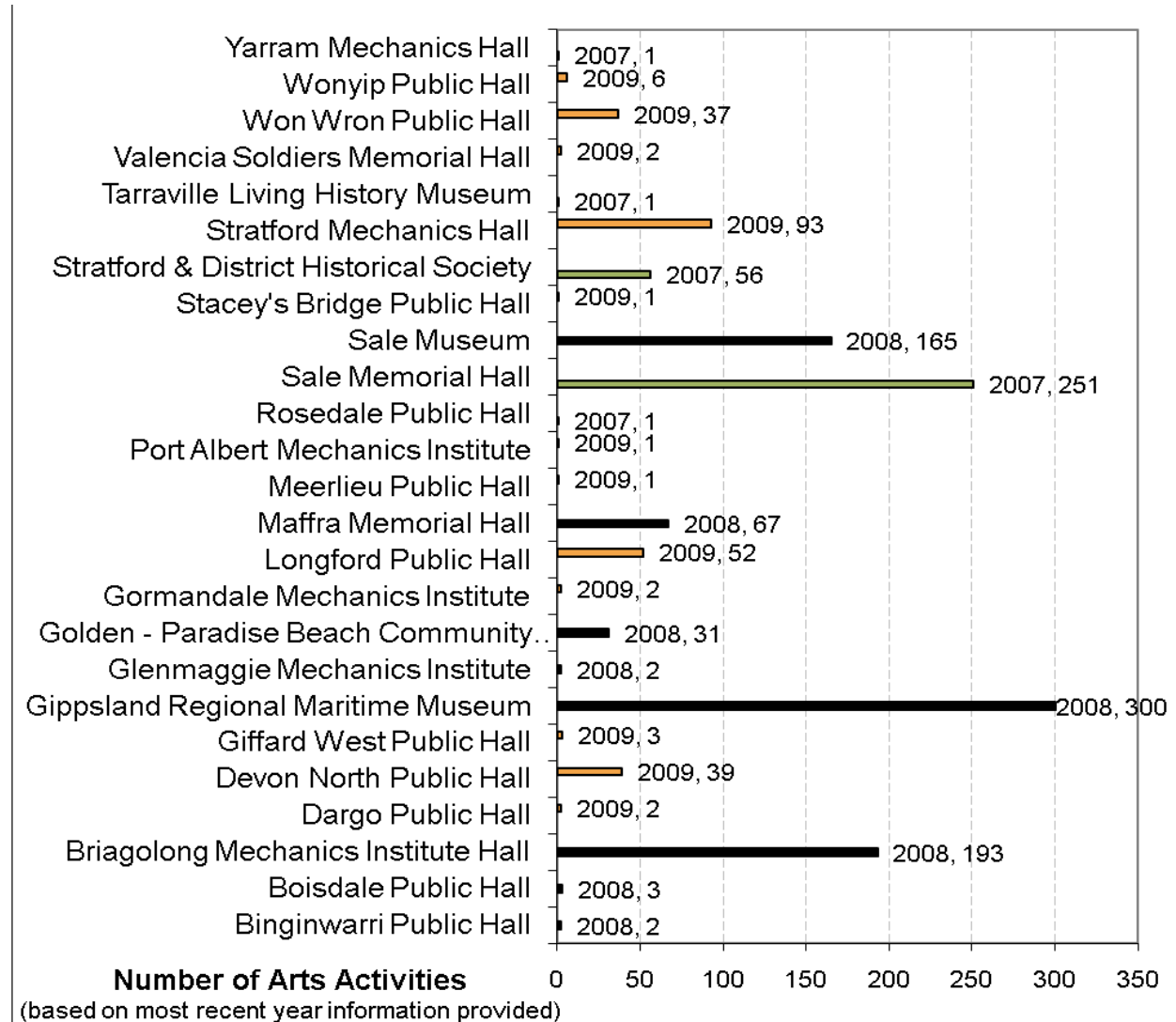
Comparison between arts and non-arts activities for facilities

This chart provides an indication of the relative proportions of arts and non-arts activities for each facility. It draws on the most recent data held at the time of compiling this information which references both arts and non-arts activities, hence the variance in years shown. It must be noted that the figures are based on information provided to Council and as such there is no reference to a number of facilities which do not provide this information yet are known to hold regular cultural activities, ie the Regent Theatre and The Courthouse Gallery in Yarram. Of note too is the fact that, despite holding a significant number of arts and non-arts activities, Heyfield Hall is not represented in this chart. This is because the committee regularly provide hall usage data to WSC, however their figures are based on patronage rather than 'hire events' and, being the only hall using this measure, the data is not readily transferable.



Facilities holding arts/cultural activities

This chart provides an indication of which facilities are holding arts/cultural activities, and which ones are the most active in this regard. As can be seen Sale Museum, Sale Memorial Hall, Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum and Briagolong Mechanics Institute appear as the most active. However the same considerations apply to this data as for the previous chart, and so it must be considered an indication only.



Dargo & district

Dargo

Population: 144

Median age: 55 years, compared with 37 years for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$519, compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Dargo is 70kms south of Mt Hotham, 90kms from Bairnsdale, 121 kms from Stratford and 146 kms from Sale. Dargo has limited access to cultural and community services.

Dargo Public Hall



Dargo Public Hall is owned by DSE and managed by the Dargo Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and operates under a Funding Agreement (FA) with WSC. It receives

\$546 in subsidy under that agreement. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Dargo

Galleries, libraries, theatres, museums

Dargo Heritage Museum.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Bush Nursing Centre.

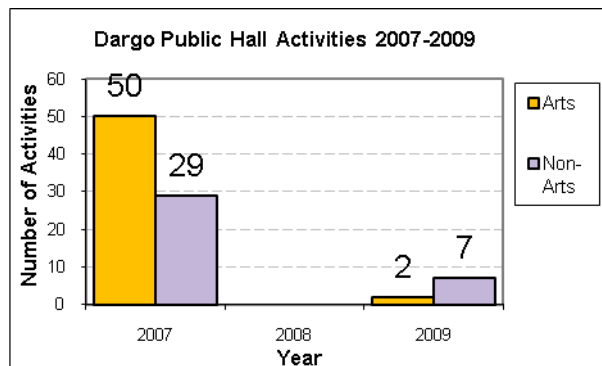
The Primary School is now closed.

Sporting Clubs include:

Dargo and District Angling Club.

Other

Access to High Country, Dargo and District Community Group, Dargo Hotel: a centrally located iconic building, the only entertainment venue in town, it provides a number of events throughout the year, Wonnangatta Caravan Park, Mill Tavern, Dargo Winery, General Store



2008. In 2009 there were 9 events, including two arts, culture and heritage related events: a

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, supper/meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets.

According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 50 arts and culture related events (all library visits) and 29 non arts related events (including family services, meetings, CFA and sport related). The mobile library no longer visits Dargo; Stratford being the closest library. There is no data for

vintage car rally and a Ball. Other users included Bush Nursing, a TV group, Landcare, CFA and various private users.

Other information

In 2004 – 2005 Council commissioned a comprehensive study - *The Dargo Design Framework* (DDF). The DDF employed a very sound consultation process and resulted in a wide range of findings relating to community values. The report was accepted by Council in May 2005.

Some points of interest from the DDF include:

- The Museum is highly valued; there is concern over the need to protect its resources, particularly the photographs.
- The Public Hall requires physical and visual links to the centre of town.
- A range of new businesses were suggested including a café, art and craft outlets and further accommodation. This speaks of a desire for cultural stimulation, the need to service the tourism industry and the importance of developing community meeting places.
- There is an increase in tourism. This is seen by most residents as necessary for the viability of the town.

The following relevant recommendations are taken from the DDF.

ISSUE / ATTRIBUTE	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	PRIORITY
<p>The community hall is an asset. Several regular services and activities (weekly) are conducted. ie; library, kindergarten and bowls.⁵</p> <p>The hall is distant from the core of town.</p> <p>The hall is located on Crown Land. The Native Title Act would need to be observed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take advantage of the back drop setting of the hall. • Improve the physical link to the core of town. • Assess the services currently provided to meet the demand or needs of the community. • Provide signage about the hall in the core area of town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the backdrop of trees and hillside. • Retain the services offered and clearly provide signage and advice of services provided. • Provide information and signage to the community hall. • Assess whether any additional services are required to meet community needs. • The hall is managed by a local committee of management and falls under the Crown Land and Reserve Act of 1978. 	High

⁵ At the time of writing the DDF, a library service was provided through the hall.

Maffra & district:

Maffra, Stratford, Briagolong, Valencia Creek, Boisdale, Munro.

This entire district has ready access to the cultural facilities of Sale and Bairnsdale.

Maffra

Population: 4,149

Median age: 40, compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$698, compared with \$1,027

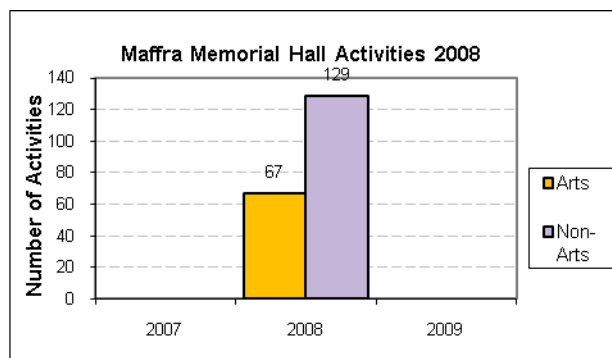
Maffra is 18 kms from Sale, 62 kms from Bairnsdale and 56 kms from Traralgon.

Maffra Memorial Hall CASE STUDY

Maffra Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 2 hall and there is a Licence and Service Agreement (L&SA) in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. It also receives \$37,379 for the Level 2 subsidy. It has been Level 2 for about 8 – 10 years.

The hall has a large raised stage with proscenium arch in the main room. There is also a large meeting room, supper room, ample kitchen, toilets, storage and backstage facilities. It has the capacity to put on large events such as conferences, and has seated 400 at theatre shows.

The committee runs on a two year term and is very stable. They do not have a great need for extra volunteers as they employ a cleaner who does small maintenance jobs, and they can afford to sub-contract larger repairs or maintenance. They consider themselves very well supported by the Council. The committee are also part of the Wellington Venues Network.



The hall operates purely on a 'hall for hire' / custodian basis. The committee manages the hall, ensuring it is ready and suitable for community usage. All activities held in the hall are run by the hirers. The committee is not involved in promoting events, or identifying and holding any extra events and do not see that as their role. The hall is extremely well used by the community and caters for a wide range of cultural and community needs. These

events are generally very well attended, with sell-outs for many of the performances. The committee offer different rates for 'profit' or 'non-profit' groups.

Refer to *Part 3: The Interviews* for transcript of interview with CoM President.

In 2009 there were 129 'hires' of the hall. 66 of these were arts related, predominately dance, theatre and music as below:

- 21 Rock and Roll; practices and performances
- 19 Primary School rehearsals and performances
- 10 Maffra Dramatic Society rehearsals and performances
- 5 Cabaret/Balls (meals and show)
- 4 Body & Soul Dance School performances
- 3 Musical performance; Maffra Secondary College
- 2 Workshop and performance; Primary School
- 1 Battle of the Bands
- 1 Belly dance concert

The non-arts events are also an important part of the community fabric including weekly church services run through the Community Church and school exams.

The hall also caters for significant regional or state-wide events, one example

being the recent Small Towns Summit which drew attendees from around the state. The committee are looking at installing multi-media equipment in order to better cater for that market, as well as to be able to provide those facilities for local users. The committee President suggested that there was a need for more small meetings rooms in town and would like to be able to provide that through the hall. They previously provided this through what is now the

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Maffra

Galleries, libraries, theatres, museums

Maffra Art Space, Public Library, Gippsland Vehicle Collectino, Maffra Beet Museum.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Maffra Community House, 2 x Primary Schools, Kindergartens, Maffra Secondary College (amphitheatre / hall), Churches and associated halls , George Gray Centre (Foster Place Café and Gallery), Cameron Sporting Complex, Maffra Swimming Pool, Kemp Aquatic, heated pool.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Maffra Dramatics Society, Gippsland Fiddle Orchestra, Maffra & District Historical Society, Maffra Municipal Band, Macalister Valley Highland dancers, S'cool House Rock.

Art related events or festivals

Maffra Mardi Gras.

Craft and related hobby clubs include:

Machine knitters, McMillan Rock Hounds, aero modeller.

Sporting Clubs include:

Tennis, Football, Swimming, Squash & Racquetball, netball, Lawn Tennis, Hockey, Gymnastics, Golf, Croquet, Cricket, Bowls, Basketball, Angling, Walking, Motorcycle, Nordic skiing, dogs, Badminton, Rifles, BMX.

Service & Similar groups include:

CRG, Apex, Red Cross, Catholic Women's League, CWA, church groups, CFA, Lions, Lions Ladies, Landcare, Maffra Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Scouts and Cubs, Rotary, RSL.

Other:

Cambrai Hostel regularly provides live music, 2 x Hotels, Pinu Deru mineral collection, Rail Trails, Community newsletter

Maffra Art Space. They are also currently debating the pros and cons of installing retractable tiered seating.

The hall has excellent, restaurant level, catering facilities which help draw in hirers such as conferences, weddings and private functions.

“No we don’t market anything. We look after the facility. Make sure the facility is in good condition. Because really if you start into that sort of thing you really need another person, you need a paid person.”

Maffra Memorial Hall Committee of Management member

Maffra Beet Museum



The Maffra Beet Museum receives \$650 (-\$104 licence fee) from WSC and there is an L&SA in place with the Maffra Historical Society to manage the museum. The museum's main focus is the sugar beet industry in Maffra 1896 – 1948. The Beet Museum is open on the first Sunday of every month from 10 am to 4 pm (to coincide with the Maffra Sunday Market). The Historical Society has drawn up a set of plans for

the further development of the museum facilities. Their main concerns are around storage facilities: size, security and archival protection.

Other information

The Maffra Community Plan was launched in 2008. Their vision includes developing the Port of Maffra and enhancing the streetscapes. Areas in the plan that specifically relate to the Maffra Hall include investigating the possibility of: retractable tiered seating; a digital cinema fit out; and promoting it as a convention centre. The plan is up for review in 2010.

Stratford

Population: 1,440

Median age: 42 years, compared with 37 years for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$789, compared with \$1,027 in Australia

The home of the Shakespeare Festival, Stratford has a strong community theatre focus, and is also a vital player in the community music scene. There are some important aboriginal sites in the area, including scar trees and rock grinding sites that are part of the Bataluk Cultural Trail.

Stratford is 11 kms from Maffra, 16 kms from Sale and 52 kms from Bairnsdale.

Stratford Mechanics Hall CASE STUDY

Stratford Mechanics Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 2 hall and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. It also receives \$5,530 for the Level 2 subsidy. This is significantly lower than other Level 2 facilities.

The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10.

The facility consists of a main hall with sloping stage, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets. The hall was upgraded in 2003. The upgrade included a servery and supper area that can be accessed directly from the hall, new storage, new foyer and forecourt with disabled access. The hall has the only sloping stage in the region, it also now has a commercial kitchen.

The committee operates on one year terms and is concerned about succession planning, as most of the committee members are older people. Overwork and lack of human capacity is also an issue as most of the committee members are on numerous other committees, even up to five or six in total. They face difficulties in attracting new people onto the committee. They recognise their good fortune (and good planning) in that the committee membership includes tradespeople (a plumber, an electrician, a cabinet maker and a painter). They rely heavily on

the volunteer labour that this enables and state that they would not have been able to afford many of the upgrades and improvements if not for this substantial and generous in kind support. The hall is also well supported by the wider community, both through usage and during fundraising activities, both large and small: \$50,000 was raised in seven months for the 2003

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Stratford

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Public Library, Stratford Courthouse Theatre and Gallery, Red River Designs Gallery.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Churches and associated halls, Kindergarten, Playgroup, 2 x Primary schools, Swimming pool, Recreation Reserve, Bowling Club, Skateboard Park, The Knob Reserve.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Shakespeare on the River Association, Stratford Singers, Gippsland Bush Poets, Spinning & Craft, Patchwork, Stratford Historical Society.

Art related events or festivals

Shakespeare on the River Festival.

Sporting Clubs and activities include:

Badminton, Tae Kwon Do, Angling, Bowls, Cricket, Football, Pony, Horse riding, BMX, Indoor Soccer, Netball, Basketball, Tennis, Table tennis.

Service and similar groups include:

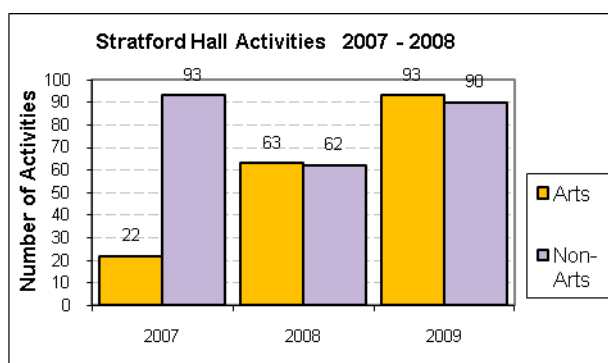
CRG, Landcare, Lions, CWA, Catholic Women's League, Legacy, Neighbourhood Watch, Scouts and Cubs, Church groups, RSL, Red Cross, CFA, Senior Citizen.

Other

The Avon River, the Bataluk Cultural Trail has significant sites at the Knob Reserve, Community newsletter, Rail trails.

upgrade. They are also appreciative of the Council support that they receive from a range of sources including Parks & Environmental Services Unit, Property Unit, and through Community Grants. The committee is part of the Wellington Venues Network and sees it as an extremely useful source of information and support, although they state that they could see a benefit in it being more structured.

The hall mainly operates on a 'hall for hire' / custodian basis. They are not however philosophically opposed to holding their own events; they recognise it as a valid part of their role. The committee states that they have simply not had the time or capacity lately due to the recent upgrades. The committee also have concerns about the perceived risks involved in running their own activities. They have a strong desire to run the hall as a community facility; being alert to keeping hire costs for community users to a minimum. Their income stream is a mix of WSC subsidy, hall hire and fundraising, with hall hire being the largest. They are very reliant on fundraising, in kind support and donations (such as a recently donated PA system). The committee raised concerns about the variance in the amount of funding received by different halls. The difference between the amounts received by Stratford and by Maffra was cited as a noteworthy example, (\$37,379 - \$5,530) as they believe that the level of difference is not reflected to the same degree in their level and type of activity, or in their respective populations. However there is a noteworthy difference in the size and type of facility.



In 2008 Stratford hall had 125 events at the hall: 63 arts and cultural events and 62 non-arts and cultural events – demonstrating a higher than average proportion of arts related activities. The arts and cultural events were predominantly theatre related as shown below, reflecting the main arts focus of the town.

- 28 Spinners and Craft Group
- 20 Shakespeare Festival
- 13 School performances and rehearsals
- 2 Disco

The non-arts events are also an important part of the community fabric: CRG and service group meetings, dinners, parties, funerals, weddings, a conference and regular Tae Kwon Do classes. The committee are highly aware of their supportive role in the community.

In 2009 there were 183 events: 93 arts related and 90 non arts related.

- 19 Shakespeare Festival
- 44 Craft group
- 13 School performances and rehearsals
- 17 Sale Theatre Group performances and rehearsals

Other users included Stratford Lions Club, Red Cross, Tae Kwon Do and various private users. The committee notes that the hall faces competition from a range of places in town that cater for community needs as far as meeting rooms go. This means that the committee must, of necessity, keep its hire fees quite low and it finds this can be problematic. There is also a commercial theatre in town although it is quite small and unlikely to meet all the needs of the town.

The committee is interested in a number of possibilities that were raised during the consultation including conducting a comprehensive hall audit and being listed as part of a small touring network. They are generally interested in encouraging more opportunities for performing arts and music in the area, as well as wanting to attract more weddings and similar events, taking advantage of their new kitchen.

Other information

The Stratford Community Plan was launched in November 2008. Their vision includes encouraging more activities for young people, development of a Community House and Men's Shed, continued support of the Shakespeare Festival, and more arts and cultural festivals. The plan is due for review in 2011.

Briagolong

Population: 546

Median age: 36 years, compared with 37 years for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$782, compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Distinctive for its strong arts culture, most readily evident through the visual arts and live music scene. Renowned for people seeking an alternative lifestyle or owner builders, Briagolong has a varied mix of ages and backgrounds, which makes for a varied community. There are some important aboriginal sites in the area and the town also has a strong goldmining and pioneering heritage.

Briagolong is 20 kms from Maffra, 15 kms from Stratford, 32 kms from Sale and 60kms from Bairnsdale.

Briagolong Mechanics Institute CASE STUDY



Briagolong Mechanics Institute is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 hall and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. Being level 3 it does not receive any further subsidy. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07, 2007/08 & 2008/09.

The building is heritage listed and adjoins the Community House. The hall has a raised stage with proscenium arch and can seat 200 +. There is a foyer with open fireplace, supper room with open fire place, library/pool room, two smaller rooms, a large kitchen and recently renovated toilets. There are also gas heaters in the hall and supper room which have increased its usability. The Community House (on the right of the picture above) connects with an internal door as well as separate entry.

The committee operate on three year terms with only three positions becoming available on a rotating basis each year. This works well for them. It is a stable and efficient committee with ten members, plus two recently co-opted members (arts advisor⁶ and technical advisor). There is a respectable age range within the committee and succession planning is not of immediate concern. The Hall is well supported by the community with volunteers providing labour when needed, for example during renovations although the committee has expressed a desire for the community to adopt a more proactive stance regarding organising community events. The committee is not part of the Wellington Venues Network⁷, but would welcome the opportunity to become involved. The committee are also interested in being part of any arts/culture network that is established in the future, as well as doing a venue audit and being listed as part of a small touring network. The Hall works in close collaboration with the Community House, which is highly beneficial for both organisations. There is also a Community House representative on the committee.

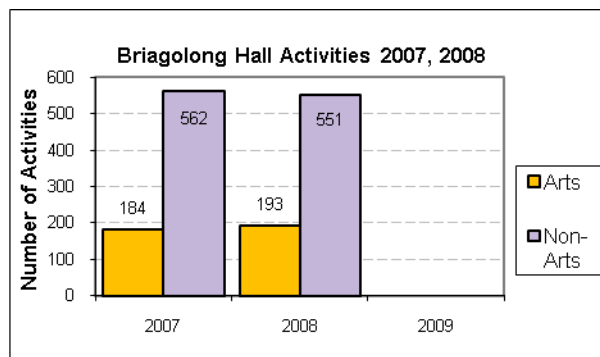
The committee feel well supported by Council and are intending to apply for Level 2 status; they are aware of all the requirements and processes involved. However they also identified areas in which the Council could provide greater support, the most notable being the creation of a position focussed on supporting cultural activity across the shire.

The hall operates on a 'hall for hire' basis, but the committee are also proactive in initiating and running events. They have, however, run into difficulties with some community initiated events which have then been left largely up to the committee to manage, and they find that the load is too great. Consequently they are becoming more discriminating in what they take on – being clear about the difference between what an individual or group in the community may suggest the committee do, and what the committee will initiate themselves, based on a good understanding of community cultural dynamics.

“Value for members’ hours is what you have to weigh up. You don’t want to burn the committee out with things that aren’t productive.”

⁶ Part way through this consultation I was coopted as the Arts Advisor to the Committee

⁷ Since this information was gathered the Committee have attended their first WVN meeting.



Their main source of income is rental, followed by fundraising. In 2008 the Hall had 744 events – a higher than average figure. According to the figures provided 193 of these were arts related, and 551 non-arts related. The arts related activities are a strong mix of painting, dancing, music and woodwork, reflecting the artistic nature of this community. Note that the Primary School hire figures (20) did not specify if it was for concerts or other activities, and so are not

included in the arts figures, even though it is likely that some of those would be for school

concerts and rehearsals. Also note that the Briagolong School of Fine Art no longer operates the painting classes, however the artists as a group are continuing to meet in the same manner at the hall once a week.

- 66 Art classes (full day)
- Briagolong School of Fine Art
- 60 Belly dancing classes
- 50 Woodwork, Community House
- 7 Music Concerts; Foothills Music, ABC, Stratford Singers
- 3 Briagolong Film Festival
- 3 Dance evenings
- 1 Carols
- 1 Fashion parade
- 1 Belly dance concert

The non-arts events are also an important part of the community fabric: CRG and service group meetings, Community House activities, playgroup, yoga, Senior Citizens, community breakfasts, a heritage forum, a Worksafe dinner, elections, parties, funerals and weddings.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Briagolong Libraries, galleries, theatres

Mobile library, The Big Gallery – community run venture.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Primary School, Kindergarten, Community House, Churches and associated halls, Tennis Courts, BMX track, Recreation Reserve.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Briagolong artists group (responsible for art gallery), Foothills Family Music, Raised Voices (choir), Wellington Shire Heritage Network group

Art related regular activities

Briagolong Film Festival, Briagolong Film Festival Short film competition, Foothills Family Music Camps and Concerts, regular live music at the Pub.

Craft and hobby groups include:

Many art and craft groups operate through the Community House and the Hall (regular painting sessions, folk art, woodwork, textiles – felting and patchwork).

Sporting Clubs include:

Tennis, Football, Cricket, Pony, Horse riding, Senior Citizens exercise.

Service and similar groups include:

CRG, Lions, RSL, CFA, Senior Citizens, Briagolong Streetscape Group.

Other

Maffra Avon Owner Builders, Upper Avon Landcare, Community newsletter.

The committee are highly aware of their role in the community and are active participants in shaping the future of their town and region through the arts. The best example of this being the Briagolong Film Festival, now in its 5th year. In 2009 the Film Festival had close to 1,000⁸ visits and is well regarded by locals and visitors. It is also a great revenue raiser for the committee. The festival runs alongside the Short Film Competition which provides a development and showcase opportunity for budding filmmakers. The committee are also now considering establishing a Film Society.

The committee would like to run more events such as art shows, which have been very successful in the past but, like many committees, they suffer from being overstretched and under-resourced and are fearful of burnout. They have developed some strategies around that and are quite clear about where they should spend their time and resources. They also cite a lack of suitable expertise amongst their members and would welcome more assistance from the community to initiate and drive that type of event. All the arts events are very well patronised: music concerts and art shows regularly achieve audiences of 200. They have found though that this community is less interested in attending dance concerts, old time dance activities and suchlike.

The Hall is heritage listed and holds an important historical library collection. There is regular interest from across the region, as well as from as far afield as Melbourne, and the committee regularly hosts talks for groups, showing photographs and books and linking them in with other places of note around town. It is worth noting here that heritage listing can lead to increased maintenance costs for hall committees due in part to imposed restrictions on materials and techniques. At the same time it can increase the tourism potential for the location.

“Some people see art as something you really don’t need, as a luxury. But really you do: it is food for the soul, it is food for the mind and it is something that is essential for our wellbeing in these small towns.”

Briagolong Mechanics Institute Committee of Management member

See *Part 3: The Interviews* for the transcript of an interview with the Committee.

Other information

The Community Plan was launched in 2008. Priorities include: supporting regular activities at the hall such as markets, dances and more events in general.

⁸ In 2010 this figure increased to over 1,200

Valencia Creek

Population: 602⁹

Median age: 41 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$1,008 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

The Valencia Creek, Boisdale, Bushy Park area has a strong pioneering heritage; by 1840 Angus McMillan was building his homestead at Bushy Park, with settlement beginning around the 1870's. It is now a farming community. There are also many indigenous cultural heritage sites and objects found in the region, including grinding stones and canoe trees. Valencia Creek plays a significant role in the local music scene, due to the international acts which regularly perform at the hall at the invitation of the hall committee.

Valencia Creek is 17 kms from Maffra, 34 kms from Sale, 5 kms from Boisdale and 11 kms from Briagolong.

Valencia Soldiers Memorial Hall

CASE STUDY

Valencia Soldiers Memorial Hall is owned by Trust and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 hall and there is a L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2008/09.

The hall is used in a similar manner to most small halls around Wellington, for various meetings and community activities (ie bushfire information meetings, trivia nights and movie nights). Events are often initiated by the committee, in response to perceived community need. In 2009 there were 23 events at the hall: 1 of which was arts related: a music night. Other users included the CFA, the hall committee, Landcare, a trivia night for the community and various private users.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Valencia Creek

Art related regular activities

Music nights at the hall (a few times a year).

Sporting Clubs include:

Alpine Trail Rides, Stratford Maffra rifles, exercise classes at Boisdale Hall cater for residents.

Service and similar groups include:

CRG (Boisdale and district), Neighbourhood Watch (Boisdale and district), CFA.

Other

Maffra Avon Owner Builders, Upper Avon Landcare.

⁹These statistics are for Boisdale / Valencia / Bushy Park

The hall comprises a large open main room, small storage room, kitchen and toilet facilities. There is a small stage but the committee have identified that a larger, sectional, portable stage would be more useful. They have also identified acoustic problems and heating as issues that need addressing.

The committee is not part of the Wellington Venues Network, possibly due to lack of awareness of the role of the network and notification of meetings. They would be interested in exploring membership. They are also interested in being part of a shire wide Arts & Culture network if it becomes established, as well as conducting a venue audit and being listed as part of a small touring network. They see communications and networking as major areas of potential support.

Their income stream is a fairly equal mix of fundraising, hall hire and shire subsidy, with fundraising being slightly highest. They also apply for grants as required and noted the usefulness of the Community Facilitators in helping with that; both in identifying potential sources, and helping them through the process. They pointed out that they do not have significantly high expenses.

The committee enjoys good community support when needed, often in the practical trades area (ie painting and maintenance) as well as by younger community members. However they are overstretched, frustrated by an inability to attract new members to the committee, and are concerned about succession.

“We struggle to – and I’m sure it is the same for all rural communities – attract new members ...”

“It’s made worse in a way because a lot of the farms have got bigger, all the labour is hired. They’re not family farms; there are not the families there that are going to stay long enough to be involved in the local community.”

Valencia Soldiers Memorial Hall Committee of Management members

They generally conduct their own promotions; when they have international acts they are able to get airplay on ABC radio and other publicity. At times they also run paid ads in the paper and distribute fliers.

Valencia Creek Hall stands out for its live music activities, holding at least one concert per year, sometimes more. These draw international musicians who have come to Australia to play at the major folk festivals. They also put on dances or concerts featuring local musicians. These events are highly anticipated and well attended by both the local and the district community.

Valencia residents often attend exercise classes in Boisdale Hall. The community also rely heavily on surrounding towns for arts and cultural activities; Briagolong, Stratford, Maffra and Sale.

The main limiting factors for the number of events the committee can hold / hire are:

- A small window of opportunity in which to hold events. This is caused by a lack of suitable heating and community availability factors. Being a predominately farming community there are many months when the community cannot attend events due to farm and seasonal commitments, this is limited further by an inability to successfully hold events over winter due to the hall being cold.
- Small potential audience
- Human resources – finding people to help spread the workload
- A need for small upgrades, such as to the kitchen facilities.

Practical measures of support that the committee have identified include:

- Positions such as the Community Facilitator being able to support them by sharing information and opportunities
- Good shire-wide communications and networking

The committee noted a change in the community makeup over the last decade or so, with more farms getting larger, consequently having fewer workers and fewer families; most labour being hired. This has an impact on their ability to draw on volunteer support.

“Around Christmas time, either side of Christmas, everyone is too busy, being a farming community: “Oh we can’t have it now because we are making hay, or we’re watering, or we’re getting ready for fires, or we’re having Christmas” So you have a period between February, March and April when you can have things, and then it starts getting too cold.”

Valencia Soldiers Memorial Hall Committee of Management member

See *Part 3: The Interviews* for discussion with committee members.

Other information

Boisdale, Bushy Park and Valencia Creek have a combined Community Plan and an active CRG. Their vision statement is: *We will work together to provide a safe and welcoming community for our residents and visitors and to preserve and promote our local environment and heritage.*

Issues of note identified through the consultation informing the plan include:

- More community functions
- Make better use of our lovely halls
- Only meeting neighbours when there is a bushfire threat
- More social interaction

Boisdale

Population: 602¹⁰

Median age: 41 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$1,008 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Boisdale is 9kms from Briagolong, 12 kms from Maffra and 31 kms from Sale

Boisdale Public Hall

Boisdale Public Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 hall and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08.

The hall comprises a main room with raised stage, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilet facilities.

In 2008 Boisdale hall had 71 events: 3 were arts related and 68 were non arts related. The three arts events were Vocal Noshes. The non arts events included: exercise classes, tai chi, parties, weddings, and meetings by the Red Cross, Landcare, Garden Club and others.

In 2009 there were 55 events, none of which were arts related. Users included the Red Cross, Landcare, an exercise group, Boisdale Garden Club, the Primary School, Boisdale Progress Association and various private users.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Boisdale

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

*Boisdale stables is a community managed facility under development. It will be used as a museum for horse drawn agricultural machinery, as well as for workshops, art events, black tie dinners, film nights, welding and leatherwork classes, community kitchen, plant propagation. It has had a pottery wheel donated.
1 Primary School, Recreation Reserve, Tennis Courts.*

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Boisdale and District History Group.

Craft and related hobby clubs include:

Boisdale and District Garden Club, cards.

Sporting Clubs include:

Football, Netball, social Tennis, Boisdale and District Hill Climb (car).

Service and similar groups include:

CRG (Boisdale and District Progress Association, includes Neighbourhood Watch), Red Cross, CFA, Upper Avon Landcare, Boisdale Stables Committee.

Other

Community newsletter.

¹⁰ These stats are for Boisdale / Valencia / Bushy Park

Other information

Boisdale, Bushy Park and Valencia Creek have a combined Community Plan and an active CRG. Their vision statement is: *We will work together to provide a safe and welcoming community for our residents and visitors and to preserve and promote our local environment and heritage.*

Issues of note identified through the consultation informing the plan include:

- More community functions
- Make better use of our lovely halls
- Only meeting neighbours when there is a bushfire threat
- More social interaction.

Munro

Population: Not available

Median age: Not available

Median weekly household income: Not available

Munro is 11 kms from Stratford, 28 kms from Sale and 42 kms from Bairnsdale.

Munro Public hall

Munro Public Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 hall and there is an L&SA in place. Through this

the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07, 2007/08 & 2008/09.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Munro

*Australian Wildlife Gallery, CFA, Red Cross, Landcare,
Munro has a representative in the Stratford CRG*

The facility consists of a main hall, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets. According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 22 events at the hall, none of which were arts related. These were mainly local meetings, district information provision (ie bushfire) or private functions.

In 2009 there were 22 events, none of which were arts related. Users included the CFA, the Church, Red Cross, Landcare, the general community for a BBQ, and various private users. The community is largely serviced through Stratford.

The committee have recently been successful in applying for a grant to assist with storing a collection. This has raised other issues around the need to become a museum; they are affiliated with the Stratford Historical Society.

Heyfield & district

Heyfield, Newry, Tinamba, Glenmaggie, Cowwarr, Coongulla, Seaton, Nambrok, Denison.

Parts of this district have ready access to cultural facilities in Sale, Maffra, Traralgon and Rosedale. Other towns are more isolated.

Heyfield

Population: 1,461

Median age: 43 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$644 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Heyfield has a strong pioneering history with the district being named in 1841. Post World War 2 saw an influx of migrants from Europe, with much work being available at the Glenmaggie Weir. Heyfield once boasted 11 sawmills and is still a major saw milling centre. Other industries include dairy, timber and cattle.

Heyfield is 42 kms from Traralgon, 21 kms from Rosedale and 35 kms from Sale

Heyfield Memorial Hall

CASE STUDY

Heyfield Memorial Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee.

It is a Level 3 hall and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. It also receives \$650 per month from TAFE. This is paid to WSC then passed on to the hall committee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Heyfield

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Public library.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

TAFE outreach centre, Neighbourhood House, 2 x Primary Schools, Golf Club, Heyfield Sporting Stadium, Football, Netball, Basketball, Cricket, Tennis courts, Lawn Bowls, Golf course, Churches and associated halls, Swimming Pool.

Art & Heritage related groups

Body and Soul Dance School, Gippsland Wood Turners, Heyfield Family History Group, Heyfield & District Historical Society, Vintage Machinery Group.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related activities

Heyfield Camp Oven festival (inc Bush Poet), annual Vintage Machinery event, annual Heritage Day.

Craft and related hobby clubs include:

Weekly craft group at Wetlands Centre, spinning, Laurina Lodge holds regular craft activities, wide range of activities from stamp collecting to pigeon racing, Garden Club.

Sporting Clubs include:

Tae Kwon Do, Angling, Pigeons, Birdwatchers, walking, and as above in 'sporting infrastructure'.

Service and similar groups include:

CWA, CRG, Red Cross, Senior Citizens, RSL, Lions, Meet other Parents Group.

Other

Community Bank, Heyfield Wetlands Information Centre, Men's Shed, Laurina Lodge, Community newsletter, Rail trail, Heyfield Traders & Tourism.

Heyfield Hall regularly provide hall usage data to WSC, however their figures are based on patronage rather than 'hire events' and, being the only hall using this measure, the data is not readily transferable to this review. However arts related events feature quite strongly, mainly through dance activities. Body and Soul Dance Studio used to hold regular concerts, with audiences of 400+ at the hall, but they moved their concerts to Maffra two years ago due to a lack of suitable back stage facilities. Since the Dance School is located next door to the hall it is likely that they would return if the facilities were upgraded. The Old Time Dance, held as part of Australia Day celebrations, has attracted 150 – 200 participants. In 2008 they held an art show – the Kurek Collection – which attracted nearly 3,000 visitors.

“For weeks, everyone kept saying it was such a wonderful weekend. So, you know, we’re not culturally deficient in this town!”

Heyfield Memorial Hall Committee of Management member on the Kurek Collection exhibition.

Non arts activities in the hall include weddings, funerals, regular Tae Kwon Do and fitness classes, school activities, and meetings. TAFE Outreach for the northern part of Wellington Shire is also part of the overall Heyfield Hub facility, as is the library: the Heyfield Hub facility is a major resource for the community.

The hall has a foyer and a large auditorium with raised stage and proscenium arch. There is entry from the auditorium to a large meeting room with a room divider which can be used for backstage facilities, although it is not highly suitable. There is also a kitchen, and toilet facilities. There used to be access to dressing rooms underneath and behind the stage, but these are closed due to asbestos related safety issues. Even though the hall was upgraded into the Heyfield Hub a number of years ago, some of the changes have either caused new problems or not fixed existing ones. The committee have identified major issues with the hall that they would like to address. These include:

- The lack of backstage facilities: this was exacerbated during upgrades by changed internal pathways as well as by the closure of the old dressing rooms.
- Sound and lighting problems due to a lowered ceiling.
- There are also difficulties with the kitchen facilities.

“The ceiling was put in years and years ago to make the place warm for balls and such. We didn’t think far enough in advance because the lighting and that sort of equipment needed extra room. The ceiling should have been raised. And the poor people that come in to put on the lighting for shows here are at a disadvantage. So they lift the tiles off, and gradually they’ve all disappeared. And again it’s because we haven’t got the right facilities that people that can’t do the job properly, they can’t do the lighting properly.”

Heyfield Memorial Hall Committee of Management member

The committee's main concern is to upgrade their hall facilities. They see opportunities for greatly increased hall usage with improvements to the facilities, and are frustrated by opportunities passing them by due to this. They state that this increase would be both in hall hire, and in committee initiated activities such as live music, motivational speakers and concerts – a range of activities. They have a vision of the hall being highly active and playing a significant role in cultural development in their community and have many ideas as to how this could be achieved. They also indicated interest in being part of a small touring circuit.

Finances for the proposed upgrade have been sought from a number of sources including WSC, Regional Development Victoria (RDV) and Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Projects (RLCIP). Progress is continuing at the time of compiling this report. The committee is stable. They are of the opinion that they have the capacity to be reclassified as a Level 2 hall, and want to work towards that, but are unclear about the necessary steps. Their main income stream is fundraising, with donations counting significantly as well. They enjoy very strong community support – both through fundraising and volunteer work – although they have identified a need for more committee members. They initiate and promote their own events as well as operate on a hire basis. The committee is part of the WVN and would like to see membership expanded. They also suggest improvements in communication and promotion of the network.

The committee evinces great admiration for their community and a strong desire to create more cultural opportunities through the facility. They are very aware of the important role that the facility plays in their region.

Other information

Heyfield Community Plan was launched in 2008. Priorities include encouraging tourism and more activities for young people.

See *Part 3: The Interviews* for a transcription of an interview with committee and community members.

Seaton

Population: not available

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Seaton is 12 kms from Heyfield, 46 kms from Sale, 33 kms from Rosedale and 40 kms from Traralgon.

Seaton Hall

Seaton Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. There is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council. There is no usage data available at WSC.

Newry

Population: 513

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Newry is 15 kms from Heyfield, 13 kms from Maffra and 32 kms from Sale.

Newry Public Hall

Newry Public Hall, also known as the Upper Maffra Mechanics Institute, is owned freehold by the Upper Maffra Mechanics Institute Management Committee. It is a Level 3 Hall and there is a Service Agreement (SA) in place. Through this the hall receives \$546.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Newry Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure
Recreation Reserve, Tennis (social), Newry Motorcross track, Golf Course.

Craft and related hobby clubs include:

Darts, Wednesday ladies group (craft and other activities, meeting at tennis club rooms).

Sporting Clubs include:

Newry Community Tennis & Parklands, Motorcycle, Golf, Football, Netball, Junior Cricket.

Service and similar groups include:

CRG, CFA, Macalister Valley Lions Club, Red Cross.

According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 71 events at Newry Hall, none of which were arts related.

Other information

The hall has recently received upgrades with flood recovery funding. This includes repairs and upgrades to windows, the roof, and the kitchen.

Tinamba

Population: 500

Median age: 37 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$958 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Tinamba is 11 kms from Heyfield, 29 kms from Sale, 8 kms from Maffra and 5 kms from Newry.

Tinamba Public Hall

Tinamba Public Hall is owned freehold by the Management Committee. It is a Level 3 hall and there is an SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$546.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, supper/meeting room, kitchen and toilets. According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 68 events at Tinamba Hall, none of which were arts related.

Other information

WSC organised and funded a Feasibility Study into the potential of a new facility on behalf of the Committee of Management in 2008. This study explored seven possible options and teased out community views on those options. It recommends that a new facility be built on the Rail Trail land near the hall. This proposal is supported by the community. The facility would consist of a small multi-purpose meeting room, fire station and external tennis courts. There is no financial commitment towards the recommendation at the time of compiling this report.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Tinamba
Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure
Playgroup at hall.

Art related groups

Wednesday Morning group (craft).

Sporting Clubs include:

Badminton, Pool & Darts, Tennis.

Service and similar groups include:

Red Cross, CFA, CRG, Neighbourhood Watch.

Other

Macalister Demonstration Farm, Community newsletter, Rail trails, Maffra Cheese, Glenmaggie winery.

The Tinamba Community Plan was launched in 2007. Priorities include addressing a lack of recreational facilities in the township, feasibility study on the hall, and establishing a farmers market to encourage tourism and community interaction. The plan is due for review in 2012.

Glenmaggie

Population: 405

Median age: 42 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$977 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Glenmaggie is 10 kms from Heyfield, 16 kms from Coongulla (around the lake), 45 kms from Sale and 52 kms from Traralgon.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Glenmaggie

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure
Lake Glenmaggie, Caravan parks, Boating facilities.

Art related regular activities

Scottish Festival (annual).

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Regular craft at hall, History focus in hall committee.

Sporting Clubs include:

Glenmaggie Boat Club, fishing.

Service and similar groups include:

CFA, Lake Glenmaggie & Coongulla CR.,

Other

Wallaby Rise (some regular entertainment).

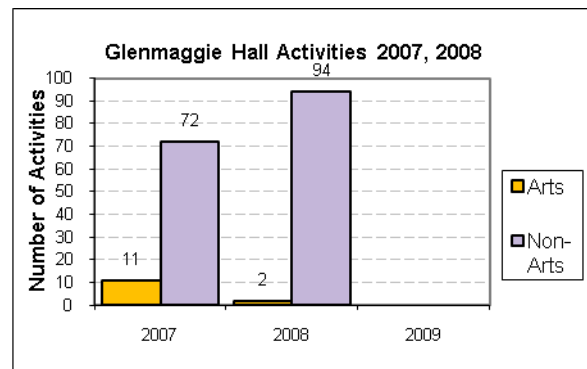
Glenmaggie Public Hall

Glenmaggie Public Hall, also known as the Glenmaggie Mechanics Institute, is owned and managed by DSE through the Glenmaggie Mechanics Institute Management Committee. There is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

In 2008 Glenmaggie Hall had 96 events: 2 were arts related and 94 were non arts related. The two arts events were a concert and a dance. The non arts events included: ladies billiards, CFA meetings, CRG meetings, indoor bowls, a school group, weddings and a DSE meeting. In 2007 there were also regular craft days at the hall; this activity has recently recommenced.

Other information

Lake Glenmaggie / Coongulla Community Plan was launched in 2007. Priorities include addressing – amongst many other things – a lack of facilities for local and visiting youth. Their vision is that *“Lake Glenmaggie area should continue to be a beautiful, safe and peaceful place which welcomes and encourages everyone who visits and lives here to respect and sustain what it has to offer. We seek ways to manage and balance the increasing*



environmental, commercial and recreational pressures which are coming to the lake. We wish to develop a sense of community which embraces permanent residents, owners and occupiers of holiday homes and visitors.” The Plan will be reviewed in 2012.

Coongulla

Population: 165

Median age: 56 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$715 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Coongulla is 12 kms from Heyfield, 16 kms from Glenmaggie (around the lake), 45 kms from Sale and 54 kms from Traralgon.

Coongulla Community Centre

Coongulla Community Centre is owned by Council and managed via the Coongulla Reserves Committee Inc. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an L&SA in

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Coongulla

*Lake Glenmaggie, Boating facilities, Playground
CFA, Lake Glenmaggie & Coongulla CRG,
Refer also to Glenmaggie information above.*

place. Through this the venue receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 & 2009/10.

According to WSC data, in 2008 the Community Centre had 18 events, none of which were art related. They consisted of meetings (CFA, CWA, Reserves Committee), parties, a wedding and use as a polling booth. In 2009 there were 15 events, none of which were arts related. Users included the CRG, Reserves Committee, CFA and various private users.

See also information from Lake Glenmaggie / Coongulla Community Plan above.

Cowwarr

Population: 563

Median age: 38 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$1,024 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Cowwarr is 13 kms from Heyfield, 45 kms from Sale and 29 kms from Traralgon.

Cowwarr Public Hall

The Cowwarr Public Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It used to have an FA with WSC but this expired in June 2008 and the committee has not re-applied, although they have been invited to do so. Consequently they do not receive any funding at the moment. The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets.

According to WSC data, in 2007 Cowwarr Hall had 27 events, none of which were arts related. The users included the Primary School, Landcare, Lions, National Women's Catholic association, CFA, Football/Netball club and the Recreation Reserve committee. There were also 3 parties.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Cowwarr

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Cowwarr Art Space, Mobile Library.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Tennis, Recreation Reserve, Football & Netball

Clubrooms, Primary School.

Art, culture & heritage related regular activities

Regular program of artists' residencies at Cowwarr Art Space, often international.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Cowwarr Community and Historical Association, Cowwarr Arts Network.

Sporting Clubs include:

Football, Netball, Tennis.

Service and similar groups include:

CRG, CFA, Lions, Cowwarr Community and Historical Association.

Other

Cowwarr Weir (Lake Glenmaggie), Cowwarr Cutters Cup (annual lawnmower races), Rail Trail.

The Cowwarr Community Plan was launched in 2009. The maintenance of the hall has been identified as a community priority in the plan. This states: *“Cowwarr Hall is in a state of disrepair. Drought has caused the foundations to shift resulting in cracking and deterioration of the façade and internal render. A structural report was commissioned years ago but has not been implemented.”* The plan also prioritises the need to highlight the heritage value of town buildings.

Nambrok

Population: 331

Median age: 37 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$1,114 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Nambrok is 14 kms from Heyfield, 17 kms from Rosedale, 23 kms from Sale and 40kms from Traralgon.

Nambrok Hall

Nambrok Hall is owned and managed by DSE through the Nambrok Public Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee. There is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 13 events at

the Hall and Recreation Reserve, none of which were art related. The users included the Football, Netball, Cricket and Tennis clubs. There were also various meetings.

In 2009 there were 14 events, none of which were arts related. Users included the Australian Electoral Commission, the general community for a Christmas Breakfast and various private users. There were also many additional ‘hires’ through the Recreation Reserve.

Denison

Population: 270

Median age: 35 compared with 37 for Australia

Median weekly household income: \$1,045 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Nambrok

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Primary School, Recreation Reserve.

Art related groups

Gippsland Wood-turners Group and Clubroom.

Sporting Clubs include:

Tennis, Football, Cricket.

Service and similar groups include:

CWA, CRG, Red Cross, Senior Citizens, RSL.

Other

Robotic Dairy, Wellington Salinity Group.

Denison is 6 kms from Heyfield, 20 kms from Rosedale, 8 kms from Nambrok and 28 kms from Sale.

***Other cultural and community infrastructure:
Denison***

Tennis Courts, Pony Club infrastructure.

Denison Public Hall

Denison Public Hall is owned and managed by the Management Committee. It is a Level 3 hall and there is a SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$546 from Council.

The facility consists of a main hall, meeting room and toilets. There is no usage data available at WSC.

Sale & district

Sale, Longford

Sale

Population: 13,336

Median age: 37 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$769 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Located in the centre of Gippsland, approximately 260 kilometres east of Melbourne, Sale is the gateway to East Victoria, the Gippsland Lakes, 90 Mile Beach, mountains and many other exciting tourist destinations.

Sale is 240 kms from Melbourne, 69 kms from Bairnsdale and 50 kms from Traralgon.

The immediate district around and including Sale is very well serviced culturally, with a Regional Art Gallery, Entertainment Centre, Library and Museums. With a large population there is a wide range of activities and interest groups.

Sale Memorial Hall

Sale Memorial Hall is owned and managed by Sale Memorial Hall and Civic Centre Inc. It is a Level 2 Hall and there is an SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$546. It also receives \$35,350 for the Level 2 subsidy.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Sale

NB: I have not comprehensively listed everything for Sale. The district is very well resourced. This is a broad indication only.

Galleries, libraries, theatres, museums

Gippsland Art Gallery, Esso BHP Billiton Wellington Entertainment Centre, Public Library, Sale Museum, Gippsland Armed Forces Museum.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Lex Glover Swimming Complex, Greenwattle Race Course, OA Ruff Sports Stadium, Neighbourhood Houses, Churches and related halls, Schools and related halls/auditoriums/art shows, Sale Temperance hall and much more.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Sale City Band, Gippsland Regional Arts Sale, Young Voices of Sale, Wellington Community Orchestra, Wellington Fine Art and Craft, Sale Lace Makers, Lakeside Rockers, Shire of Wellington Pipe Band, Sale Old time Dance Club, Sale Theatre Company, City of Sale Eisteddfod Society, Sale Historical Society, Sale Family History Group.

Art related regular events or festivals

Festivale in the Gardens at Sale (inaugural 2010), Youth Expo, Creative Gippsland Be Inspired Festival (all of Shire).

Other

Ramahyuck Aboriginal Corporation, Lake Guthridge, Wetlands & associated boardwalks, Powder Magazine, Port of Sale, RAAF base.

Note: The nearby Wurruk region also has:

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Recreation Reserve, BMX track, Primary School, Community House, Polocrosse field, CFA training facility (& Esso), TAFE facilities.

Sporting Clubs include:

Cricket, Bowls, Polocrosse.

Service and similar groups include:

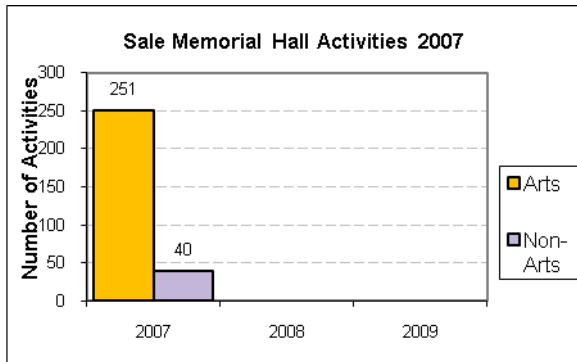
Wurruk Harmony Group, CFA.

Other

Wurruk Harmony Day, Kilmany Boys Home, West Sale Aerodrome, Fulham Correctional Facility.

The facility is a large multi-storey, U-shaped building. The public use area is mainly in the central section with other users in the two wings. The central section consists of a large main hall with

raised stage and proscenium arch. There is also a foyer with box office, large kitchen, meeting room, changing rooms, toilets and storage. One wing is hired out to the Toy Library and other users, the second wing has more meeting rooms plus a section that is owned and used by the RSL.



According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 291 events: 251 of these were arts related and 40 were not. The arts related events were predominantly

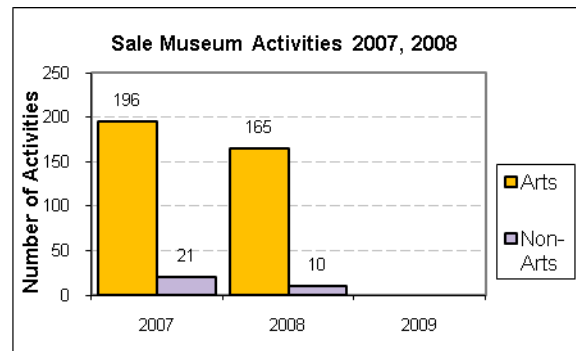
dance: line dancing, dance lessons, jazz ballet lessons, Rock n Roll dancing, Old Time dancing, 15 Eisteddfods, 11 concerts and nine cabarets or balls. The other events were exams and computer shows.

St John Ambulance Hall

St John Ambulance Hall is owned by Council and there is a lease in place to St John Ambulance, who are charged \$104 per annum. This facility is level 3 but is not treated as a public hall.

Sale Museum

The Sale Museum facility is owned by DSE and managed by the Sale Historic Society. A tenancy agreement is yet to be secured by WSC. The facility is not treated as a public hall. In 2008 there were 175 events at the Museum: 165 were arts and culture related, 10 were non-arts related meetings. The arts related events included 100 days when the museum is open to the public, 40 archival events and 25 special research events.



Longford

Population: 929

Median age: 37 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$1,139 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Longford is 8 kms from Sale, 30 kms from Rosedale and 64 kms from Yarram.

Longford Public Hall

Longford Public Hall stands out as having unique funding circumstances. It is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee in conjunction with the Recreation Reserve.

It is a Level 3 hall and there is an FA in place, through which the committee receives \$546 from Council. They also receive a 'special subsidy' of \$8,080. This was the result of a request to upgrade to a Level 2 facility. Although the review did not result in the actual reclassification of the facility, it did provide for the payment of a substantial annual operating subsidy. This commenced in 2008/09.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Longford

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Primary school, Recreation reserve, Golf Course.

Sporting Clubs include:

Tennis, Cricket, Golf.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Longford scrappers.

Service and similar groups include:

CFA, Lions.

Other

Historic Swing Bridge.

According to WSC data, in 2009 there were 133 events 52 of which were arts related. The arts events were weekly scrapbooking sessions. Other users included playgroup, Lions Club, Tennis Club, Tractor Club, Cricket Club and various private users.

Sale outer northern district

Bundalaguah, Cobains, Airly/Clydebank, Kilmany, Meerlieu

Bundalaguah

Population: not available

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Bundalaguah is 11 kms from Sale, 8 kms from Maffra and 12 kms from Stratford.

Other cultural and community infrastructure:

Bundalaguah

Primary School, Cricket, CWA (with a craft group).

Bundalaguah Hall

This facility is in an unusual situation in that it is a Council owned, Level 3 facility, but is not signed up to any form of Agreement with WSC. The management group are not an incorporated committee. This is an ongoing issue which needs to be addressed. They are not able to access any subsidy until there is an agreement in place. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08.

The facility consists of a main hall, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets. There are no Hall usage stats available at the time of compiling this report.

Cobains

Population: 383

Median age: 40 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$1,053 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Cobains is 11 kms from Sale and 18 kms from Stratford.

Cobains Hall

Cobains Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, supper /meeting room, kitchen and toilets. According to WSC

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Cobains

Marlay Point, Lake Wellington.

data, in 2008 there were 57 events of the hall, none of which were arts & culture related. Users included the school, CWA, Landcare and various private users.

Airly/Clydebank

Population: 245

Median age: 42 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$971 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

The Airly/Clydebank region is approximately 12-21 kms from Stratford and 11-19 kms from Sale. Airly/Clydebank residents have ready access to facilities at Sale and Stratford.

Airly Clydebank Public Hall **CASE STUDY**

Airly/Clydebank Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets.

Other community infrastructure: Airly / Clydebank Primary School.

There are no Hall usage stats available at the time of compiling this report.

Airly Clydebank Public Hall is currently dealing with legal boundary issues that have been a concern for about two years. This has impacted on the amount of outdoor space available to the facility and reduced their available parking space. The committee estimates they are currently occupying about a third of the space which they used to occupy. The disputed land includes the area previously used for parking and the committee state that the boundary dispute has created public safety issues which severely limit their ability to use the hall. The facility is on the intersection of two long straight roads which are frequently used by trucks travelling at speed. There is no outside lighting and not much lighting on the road. The neighbours have erected a temporary wire fence around the disputed area and there is an irrigation ditch on the other side of this, creating another public safety issue – especially for small children.

According to the raw data gathered during an interview with the committee, this situation started about 50 years ago when the owners wanted to give the land to the community. The hall committee commenced using the land on this understanding, however the process wasn't legally finalised - a fact that was not identified at the time. It has since changed hands which has complicated the situation. The committee are becoming exhausted, dispirited and frustrated with lack of progress. Note that significant progress has been made since this information was provided by the committee in November 2009.

Wellington Shire has been working with the Committee in an attempt to resolve the land ownership issue. In December 2009 Council started the process of compulsory acquisition of the

disputed land. There are changes to Planning Schemes associated with this process, and the situation could potentially take a number of years to resolve.

“ ... part of the reason that it’s so frustrating is that we give our time and want to enjoy doing it, but it’s not enjoyable if you keep being knocked back. It’s not enjoyable if you are in the supermarket and your neighbours come up and they say, “Oh when are we going to be able to have those BBQs again Linda? They were so good!” and we have to say that we are just waiting for someone else to make a decision as to when it is alright for us to all go back and use our perfectly good building and space.”

Airly Clydebank Hall Committee of Management member

When the facility was functioning properly the committee would hold an event about once a month, for example weddings, family reunions, parties, information provision or community meetings. They held monthly Friday night BBQs where the community could come together on common ground. Note that this is a community with no town: the only neutral gathering space for people of all ages is the hall and as such it plays a significant role in community cohesion.

Committee estimates that 500 -1000 people use the hall per year: they could have 150 attendees at a Christmas party for example. They have also held dances, music nights with performers, film nights, small plays, floral art displays and general community get-togethers.

The committee are part of the Wellington Venues Network and value it highly, especially for information sharing and practical solutions to infrastructure issues, for example advice on maintaining the floor, or where to get a good deal on insulation. They also find it useful for ideas and contacts for cultural activities, and it has helped them keep their morale up over the last two years. Their vision is simply to return to a position where the facility can be used by the community, to return to holding monthly BBQ’s and to try to create a welcoming space for local teenagers to get together.

“... in a community not everyone is comfortable in each other’s homes and if you say “Let’s all go to my house” and someone up the road doesn’t really enjoy it at your house then you feel like you are excluding them. Whereas if you can say “Everyone’s coming to the hall, bring new friends, bring your nanna, bring your relatives from England” it means that people network in a different way. They network in a community oriented way.”

Airly Clydebank Hall Committee of Management member

See *Part 3: The Interviews* for conversation with committee and community members.

Kilmany

Population: not available

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Kilmany is 11 kms from Rosedale and 16 kms from Sale.

Kilmany Hall

Kilmany Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

Other community infrastructure: Kilmany
Recreation Reserve, Rosedale / Kilmany Cricket Club

According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 14 events of the hall, none of which were arts & culture related. Users included Neighbourhood Watch, the hall committee and various private users.

Meerlieu

Population: 244

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Meerlieu is 41 kms from Sale, 34 kms from Bairnsdale and approximately 27 kms from Stratford.

Meerlieu Hall

Meerlieu Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07 & 2008/09.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, kitchen, storage and toilets.

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 127 events in the hall, none of which were arts related. Users included CFA, Cricket Club, Primary School, Meerlieu & District Rural Community Group and various users.

In 2009 there were 95 events, one of which was arts related (a Ball). Other users included the Cricket club, Primary School, Meerlieu & District Rural Community Group, Landcare, meetings and various other users. It is unclear whether the Primary School use was arts related: that is always likely with school usage.

Anecdotally the hall is used fairly regularly for arts related activities but that is not reflected in the official hall usage data held by WSC. For example, in 2007 I ran half a dozen workshops in the hall on community sculpture design and development. These involved 19 students, two teachers and five community members. This is not reflected in the hall usage data.

Other information

Meerlieu & District Community Plan was launched in 2009. This covers the districts of Meerlieu, Perry Bridge, Holland's Landing, Bengworden, Goon Nure and

parts of Forge Creek. Their vision is *"To develop a vibrant and cohesive local rural community which incorporates the diversity of people and ideas in the area, working together for the common good."* Priorities include: providing activities for young people such as theatre nights and dance classes; developing craft activities; seeking opportunities to host recreational and cultural events in the district; and developing a sound and data projection system for the Meerlieu Hall. Other priorities specifically regarding the hall include upgrading the hall furniture and investigating alternative heating.

Other community infrastructure: Meerlieu & district

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Primary School, Recreation Reserve, boating and fishing infrastructure at Hollands Landing.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

The Hall Committee has a strong heritage focus.

Art related regular events or activities

Periodical banquets at hall, regular arts and craft activities at hall.

Sporting Clubs include:

Cricket.

Service and similar groups include:

Meerlieu and District Rural Community Group (CRG),

CWA, CFA (Bengwarden, Meerlieu and Perry Bridge),

Landcare (Bengworden, Tom's Creek and Perry Bridge),

Perry Bridge Ladies Social club.

Other:

Strathfieldsaye (Historic and cultural significance, includes aboriginal cemetery), Community newsletter.

Sale outer southern district

Stradbroke, Seaspray, Golden Beach, Loch Sport.

Stradbroke

Population: 376

Median age: 43 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$959 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Stradbroke is 17 kms from Sale, 38 kms from Rosedale and 55 kms from Yarram.

Stradbroke Hall

Stradbroke Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

Other community infrastructure: Stradbroke
Cricket, CFA, Landcare, CWA.

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 56 events at the hall, none of which were arts related. Users included CFA, Australian Electoral Commission, Landcare, Victorian Farmers Federation, Eastern Lakes Caravan Club and the committee.

In 2009 there were 57 events, none of which were arts related. Users included the committee, CWA, VFF, CFA, and Landcare.

Seaspray

Population: 186

Median age: 46 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$615 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Seaspray is 33 kms from Sale.

Seaspray Hall

Seaspray Hall is owned and managed by DSE through the Seaspray Reserves Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through

which the committee receives \$546 from Council. The committee also look after the Recreation Reserve and other areas such as the camping ground.

Other community infrastructure: Seaspray

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Mobile library.

Community, Educational and Sporting facilities

Recreation Reserve, Primary School, Tennis Courts.

Service and similar groups include:

Ratepayers & Progress Association, Surf Lifesaving, Honeysuckles Action Group.

Other

Beach, Caravan Park, Foreshore Park.

There are no Hall usage stats available at the time of compiling this report. The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen and playground. This facility is also used by the Honeysuckles community as their community base.

Other Information

Nearby Honeysuckles launched their Community Plan in 2007. Their vision is to maintain it as “a low density residential holiday hamlet set in Banksia woodland.” Their priorities include the development of a bike path/walking track to Seaspray.

Golden Beach / Paradise Beach

Population: 318

Median age: 55 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$469 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Golden Beach is 34 kms from Sale.

Golden Beach Community Centre CASE STUDY

Golden / Paradise Beach Community Centre is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07 & 2007/08.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, kitchen, office, meeting room, storage and toilets. There is also a main room which is used as an Internet Kiosk for Seniors. Government funding guidelines require that priority users of the kiosk are aged 50+, so usage is based on membership of the Senior Citizens group, with others being able to use it on a ‘visitor’ basis. The kiosk has been established in response to an identified and locally relevant community need, operating both as an internet kiosk and social gathering place or ‘clubroom’ for seniors. However it is worth noting that this means that the room is not currently accessible to the rest of the community.

Other community infrastructure: Golden Beach

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Mobile library.

Community, Educational and Sporting facilities

Recreation Reserve, Golf, Lawn Bowl.,

Sporting Clubs include:

Golf, Aquatics, Fishing.

Service and similar groups include:

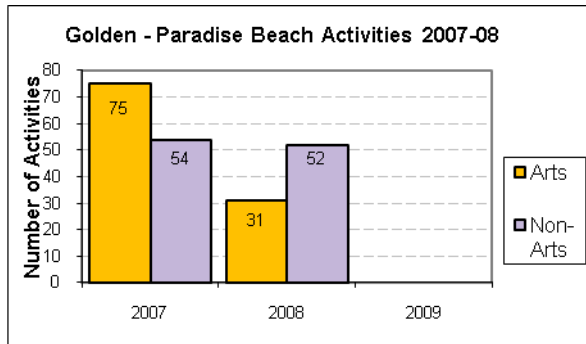
Ratepayers Association (CRG), CFA.

Other

Beach, Community Radio Station, Community newsletter.

The facility is managed by the Golden / Paradise Beach Ratepayers Association which represents a broad cross section of the community and is also heavily involved in the Town Concept Plan.

There are six on the Management Team plus six ordinary members. The committee members state that the management structure is working well, however they raised concerns about the workload. At the time of compiling this report they had a further six - eight regular volunteers, and anticipated that this would continue to grow. There is a good understanding of how to nurture and grow the volunteer base, providing ownership for ideas and initiatives, whilst allowing varying levels of involvement. Membership of the Senior Citizen’s Club has also grown since the kiosk was established. Interestingly, one third of the 60+ members come from Sale. Some are ex-Golden Beach residents, some are friends of friends – clearly this community is successfully servicing a need. They are also mindful of the need to ensure that they don’t over-develop the seniors’ area at the expense of a younger section of the community. This is where they see art and cultural activities playing a useful role.



According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 83 events, 31 of which were arts related. The arts events were all dance classes. Other users included the Ratepayers Association, Senior Citizens Club, VMMRR, Golf club, Neighbourhood Watch, Youth Group, Australian Electoral Commission and various other users. It is unclear whether the Youth Group activities were also arts related. At the time of compiling this report there

was no available data for activities under the new management structure. Their main source of income is from hall hire.

The current Management Committee see the facility as a vital element in the community fabric. They wish it to be utilised as a community hub and meeting place, providing access to cultural activities and services. Four or five times a year there are opportunities for local musicians to play, at parties or special events. Paintings by local artists are hung in the Seniors Kiosk and this display is changed every six weeks. The committee is currently discussing whether or not to extend this to the main hall and what management issues that would raise, ie security, safety, the impact on other user groups and so on. They are also looking at whether they need to establish specific curatorial and event management roles within the committee and volunteer base. There is a strong emphasis on supporting local artists – these being from Golden / Paradise Beach, Loch Sport or Sale at the furthest.

The committee is highly embedded within the life of the community and have some innovative ideas for cultural development within their community such as: enabling access to a digital camera and relevant computer programs in order to enhance the Life Saving Club’s photographic competition; fundraising for a full screen and surround sound system to enable a 50 seat

theatre; and running up to three all day events / mini festivals in and around the facility precinct throughout the year. They are also looking at providing dance classes again – the last ones closed when the teacher moved to another district. The hall is a vital part of the Town Concept Plan and as such the committee would like to create stronger physical connections between the various town assets such as the Hall, the beach, the Golf Club and the Recreation Reserve, through the creation of a cultural trail with interpretive signage, murals, bollards and special places.

“ ... it’s a cultural adjustment we are trying to do; we want to create a better living space but we don’t want to disassociate ourselves with the past and the people that were here before, and yet we don’t want to be city centric at the same time. Art allows you to do that. I think you can create a lot of vision and space without necessarily building a building.”

Golden Beach Community Centre Committee of Management member

The main concern raised by the committee was financial pressure, especially for maintenance, and the difficulties of generating income in a town of 400 people. This makes them highly reliant on grants, but they expressed concern about the time and expertise required to competitively apply for grants, and suggested that Council be responsible for finding and applying for maintenance grants. Another issue of concern for this committee is insurance and risk management – specifically around which activities are covered by Council’s policies and which are covered by the Committee’s.

They were very appreciative of the CRG system and the Community Liaison position in Council, especially the networking and information sharing aspects of that role.

See *Part 3: The Interviews* for a transcript of an interview with the Committee.

“So when we talk about how it’s been used, it’s had very little use ... we are trying to change that and provide a cultural environment, rather than spreading it all across the community in different little spots. We are trying to bring it together into one area so that people have ready and affordable access to facilities that might allow them to try something they haven’t tried before.”

Golden Beach Community Centre Committee of Management member

Loch Sport

Population: 778

Median age: 60 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$425 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Loch Sport is 57 kms from Sale and 27 kms from Golden Beach.

Loch Sport Hall

Loch Sport Hall is a Level 3 facility which is owned by Council. There have been ongoing difficulties with the sustainability of the Management Committee and it folded again in August 2009. It is currently run in a de-facto arrangement with the Loch Sport Community House. The hall has a lot of use but is ineligible for funding until a management agreement is in place. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07, 2007/08.

Other community infrastructure: Loch Sport

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Mobile library.

Community, Educational and Sporting facilities

Recreation Reserve, Tennis Court, Golf Course, Bowls, Primary School, Community House.

Sporting Clubs include:

Boat Club and facilities.

Service and similar groups include:

Senior Citizens, CFA, Ambulance, Red Cross, SES, CRG, Loch Sport Business and Community Development Group, Health Centre Advisory Group, Neighbourhood Watch.

Other

Beach, Community Newsletter.

The facility consists of a main hall, meeting rooms, kitchen and storage. There are no Hall usage statistics available at the time of compiling this report.

Rosedale & district

Rosedale, Gormandale, Willung, Carrajung, Carrajung Sth,

Rosedale

Population: 1,077 [1,487 in greater district]

Median age: 40 compared with 37 in Australia [40 in greater district]

Median weekly household income: \$775 compared with \$1,027 in Australia [\$863]

Rosedale is on the Princes Highway, it is 27 kms from Sale, 23 kms from Traralgon and 64 kms from Yarram.

Rosedale Hall

Rosedale Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

The facility consists of a main hall, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets.

According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 56 events, one of which was arts related: Carols by Candlelight. Other users included the Anglican parish, Lions and the AEC. CRG

priorities include enhancing community spirit and developing an annual festival.

Other community infrastructure: Rosedale

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Public Library

Community, Educational and Sporting facilities

Recreation Reserve, Primary School, Rosedale

Speedway, Golf Course, Community Health Centre,

Neighbourhood House.

Sporting Clubs include:

Bowls, Tennis, Rifle, Basketball, Football,

Service and similar groups include:

Senior Citizens, Neighbourhood Watch, Chamber of

Commerce, CRG, CFA, Red Cross, SES, Community

Recovery Committee.

Other

Rosedale Historical Society, Old School Building is the

Red Cross home, Drop-in centre: part of

Neighbourhood House program, King Heritage House,

Willow Park, Holey Plain.

Gormandale

Population: 756

Median age: 42 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$810 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Gormandale is 26 kms from Rosedale, 24 kms from Traralgon, 47 kms from Sale and 39 kms from Yarram.

Gormandale Mechanics Institute

Gormandale Mechanics institute is owned by DSE. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen, toilets and cloak rooms.

According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 113 events, one of which was arts related: a theatre show. Other users in that year included the Kindergarten, karate, badminton, Australian Electoral Commission and the CWA. In 2009 there were 93 events, including two music days. These are noted as being monthly and so, presumably, have recently been initiated. Other users included the Kindergarten, Karate, CRC and Youth leadership (includes discussion of a Bushfire Recovery Arts Project) and the Community House.

The hall was built in the 1920s and retains high Baltic pine ceilings and the original cloak rooms. However it requires upgrades to the kitchen and toilet block as well as reliable heating. It also requires disability access and better seating. Financial support (\$170,000) has recently been approved from VBAF to provide modern facilities and other upgrades so that it can become a community hub and social centre

Willung

Population: not available

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Willung is 14 kms from Rosedale, 36 kms from Sale, 36 kms from Traralgon and 43 kms from Yarram.

Willung Hall

Willung Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen, open fireplace and toilets. There are no Hall usage statistics available at the time of compiling this report.

Other community infrastructure: Gormandale

Libraries, galleries, theatres

Mobile Library.

Community, Educational and Sporting facilities

Community House, Primary School, Kindergarten (in hall), Recreation Reserve.

Art related groups

Recently started painting class at Community House.

Sporting Clubs include:

Football, Netball, Cricket, Tennis, Tae Kwon Do.

Other

Wineries, community newsletter.

Carrajung

Population: not available
Median age: not available
Median weekly household income: not available

Other community infrastructure: Carrajung
Tennis Courts, CFA.

Carrajung is 37 kms from Rosedale, 35 kms from Yarram, 40 kms from Traralgon and 65 kms from Sale.

Carrajung Hall

Carrajung Hall is owned by the Management Committee and is a Level 3 facility. There is an L&SA in place because the Management Committee also manage the Memorial Park which is owned by the Shire. Through the L&SA, the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee.

There are no Hall usage statistics available at the time of compiling this report.

Carrajung South

Population: not available
Median age: not available
Median weekly household income: not available

Carrajung South is 15 kms from Carrajung, 43 kms from Rosedale, 27 kms from Yarram, 46 kms from Traralgon and 53 kms from Sale.

Carrajung South Hall

Carrajung South Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility. The FA has expired but they are eligible to reapply. There are no Hall usage statistics available at the time of compiling this report.

Other community infrastructure: Carrajung South
CRC, CFA, Recreation Reserve.

Prior to the 2009 fires the hall had little community use but since then the committee has held several successful community events to bring the community back together. The CFA, which is next door, used the hall as a staging place during the February fires. The hall is also used for family gatherings and by a number of other community groups. The hall is in a state of disrepair and the Community Recovery Committee put in an application to VBAF for funds for an upgrade. Financial support of \$119,000 has recently been approved from VBAF. This is for an upgrade to the kitchen, repairs to termite damage to the hall (the stage currently cannot be used for community events), as well as plumbing and electrical upgrades.

Licola & district

Licola

Licola

Population: 21

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Licola is 54 kms from Heyfield, 74 kms from Rosedale, 88 kms from Sale, 85 kms from Traralgon and, in the other direction, 90 kms from Jamieson.

Licola Hall

This is a new facility which opened in 2009 and incorporates a CFA shed, plus a hall / community meeting room. The facility is owned by

Other community infrastructure: Licola

Licola Development and Recovery Group (CRG), CFA, Lions Village, Caravan Park, Access to High Country

Council: the fire-station is leased to the CFA and the hall is licensed to, and managed by, the CFA. This provides for sole CFA use of the fire-station and public use of the hall. It is a Level 3 facility and there is no funding subsidy. However, due to the hall being a public facility, Council provide some additional support through payment of all services, ie electricity, water and gas. This is a unique model developed for the particular circumstances presented at Licola.

Yarram & district

Yarram, Port Albert, Devon North, Woodside, Tarraville.

Yarram

Population: 1,715 [2,105 in greater Yarram district]

Median age: 48 compared with 37 in Australia [46 in district]

Median weekly household income: \$577 compared with \$1,027 in Australia [\$609 in district]

Yarram is 72 kms from Sale, 67 kms from Traralgon and 51 kms from Foster.

Yarram Courthouse Gallery **CASE STUDY**



Yarram Courthouse Gallery is located in the old Courthouse building. WSC lease the premises to Mirridong Services, who hold an agreement with the Yarram Courthouse Gallery Committee governing the committee's use of part of the building as an exhibition space. Mirridong also run a craft shop and Information Centre in the premises. There is no funding subsidy and Mirridong pay a \$104 licence fee to Council. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2009/10.

There are no facility usage statistics at the time of compiling this report.

The gallery has been operating for about three years and the current committee of six has been operating for approximately 20 months. During that time the general gallery membership has increased from five to 61. Volunteers are drawn from the gallery membership base and generally have clear roles, ie preparing invitations, managing the Alberton Collection and so on. The committee indicated a desire to increase membership to eight in order to share the work load, however they would need to change their constitution to do so. They are mindful of the need to develop a succession plan and continue to attract new members.

Their main activity is presenting exhibitions. These are conducted on either a hire model where artists approach the Gallery, or a themed model where the committee call for entries. They always have a good response to themed exhibitions with about 25% of entries coming from the Yarram district, and the remainder coming from surrounding districts, including Sale, Foster and Toora. Opening nights tend to get between 60 and 200 people, depending on the artist/s. Their general membership has increased from 5 – 61 over 15 months: an indication that they are clearly tapping into a community need. There is a general lull over the winter months, which is

mainly due to lower visitor numbers in the town. Sharing premises with the Information Centre is seen as a bonus as it brings in many visitors.

“... a lot of people say to me that it is great that there is something else in Yarram other than sport. Quite a lot of people say that to me.”

Yarram Courthouse Gallery Committee of Management member

The committee also distribute a quarterly newsletter, run three cultural excursions for members each year (ie to other galleries), and are looking at holding some small classical music performances in the space. They held a workshop in 2009 to upskill gallery members in hanging and presenting exhibitions. The space also houses the Alberton Collection, which is an historically and locally significant collection of work. This is exhibited in between other exhibitions.

Other cultural and community infrastructure: Yarram

Galleries, libraries, theatres, museums

Public Library, Regent Theatre, Courthouse Gallery.

Community, Educational and Sporting infrastructure

Secondary College, 2 x Primary Schools, TAFE Outreach, Community Learning Centre, Kindergartens, Church halls and various other halls, Golf Course, Bowling, Tennis, Swimming Pool, Netball, Recreation Reserves, Basketball, Yarram & District Health Services, Mirridong Services, The Station Youth Centre.

Art, craft, culture & heritage related groups

Spring into Art committee (on hold), Tarra Festival committee, Eisteddfod, Old Time Dance group, Yarram & District schools Cultural Committee, Tarra Taras, Art classes (private and through Learning Centre).

Art related events or festivals

Tarra Festival, Rotary Art Show, Festival for Healthy Living (currently in a two year arts project with the schools), Bushfire related arts recovery projects in development including; community sculptural pizza oven, digital film project and community amphitheatre.

Sporting Clubs include:

Basketball, Pony, Fishing, Golf, Bowling, Tennis, Swimming, Netball, Horse Trail riding, Gymnastics, Motorcycle, Badminton, Walking, Football, Cricket.

Service and similar groups include:

Tarra trail committee, Lions, Probus, Rotary, Yarram Traders & Tourism, CWA.

Other

Historically significant buildings, DSE building, WSC service centre, Aerodrome, Tarra Bulga National Park, Beaches, Men's Shed.

“I would like to make the point that the Shire has to be aware that people are doing this for nothing and that they have to be a) valued and b) recognised that they are doing it for you – for the community – for free. There is only so much you can ask of them.”

Yarram Courthouse Gallery Committee of Management member

Publicity is an area of concern for the committee and they would welcome further assistance, such as in photocopying the newsletter or having web presence through the Council's website. They found their involvement with the *Creative Gippsland Be Inspired Festival* has been helpful

and brought visitors to the gallery. Many visitors are also drawn to the iconic nature of the building; architecture is a strong drawcard for them. They also wish to create stronger links with galleries in nearby towns such as Foster. Another area on which they wish to focus is in attracting local people into the gallery. This is seen as a stumbling block although they are making headway through personal visits to service groups such as Probus. The committee are interested in being part of a shire-wide arts network and accessing professional development.

The committee noted that difficulties arise through the sublease arrangement with Mirridong. One area of concern relates to the opening hours, another area of concern is the need for an agreement to be ratified between Council, Mirridong and the Committee. At the time of compiling this report that remained outstanding. A consequence of this is that the gallery are only able to book exhibitions 12 months in advance – which has implications for any plans to develop the gallery. The committee has focussed on developing sound procedures over the past year and a half: ie contracts and exhibition processes.

Their main source of income is through commissions on work sold, despite it being a moderate 20%. Artists are charged \$25-\$30 per week for rental, \$20 of which the committee pay to Mirridong for their own rental. Most of their money comes from membership fees – again very low at \$5pa. They recognise that they don't actually need much money to operate as they are. This is more likely to be an issue if they wish to grow significantly or develop promotional resources such as a colour brochure.

They have received significant support from Council through the Tourism Development and Marketing Officer position, as well as through an Economic Development Officer position with a focus on Yarram (this position no longer exists). These two positions were able to assist with small equipment items such as plinths or noticeboards, and with promotion and photocopying.

Their vision for the future includes closer ties with the school, reciprocal exhibiting arrangements with other galleries, and to be part of a wider network. Their main needs are to do with administrative support.

“Yarram needs someone like Julie Nethercote, whose contract expires soon – she will be a big loss – someone from within the community, that you could go to for that sort of support Being willing to do the nuts and bolts stuff, that was an emotional support as much as a practical support. Having invitations and posters printed and newsletters – it was a great support Like a secretary for various communities.”

Yarram Courthouse Gallery Committee of Management member

See *Part 3: The Interviews* for a transcription of an interview with the Committee of Management.

Regent Theatre CASE STUDY



Yarram Regent Theatre is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 2 facility and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. It also receives \$31,400 for the Level 2 subsidy, which is currently received in quarterly instalments following successful review of the theatre's finances. WSC also employ the caretaker directly (\$3,000pa).

The facility is a grand multi story building which was built in 1930 as a Cinema. It was recently heritage listed for the façade, the foyer and main hall. It has a large main hall with raised stage, floor and dress circle viewing areas and can seat 560: 300 in the dress circle and 260 downstairs. The downstairs seating is removable which enables the main hall to be used for dances, conferences, art shows and similar. There is also a foyer, box office, bar, meeting rooms, mezzanine, dressing rooms, kitchen, storage and toilets. Assets include a satellite receiver and digital projector.

The committee operate on one year terms and the current committee has been stable for the last few years. One member has been on since its inception in the late 1990's. Up until 2003 they were a Section 86 committee. Originally the facility had a part time Manager who was employed by the Shire; they now have a Manager employed by the committee. There are a number of alternative explanations offered regarding this transition. Likewise there are a range of available explanations regarding how the facility found itself in financial difficulties over the last few years. More information can be found in the interviews in Part 3 of this document. There is an opportunity now to find a way forward which is beneficial to the community.

As part of the stabilising measures adopted over 2009 the committee is now audited quarterly, the facilities' activities have been curtailed, and the Manager has reduced her hours to 10 (paid) per week. She also works approximately another 10 hours per week in a voluntary capacity. There are difficulties inherent in a system in which a Manager is employed by a committee subject to frequent change – both in personnel and in ways of working.

The current committee's main goals are to stabilise the situation, put in place processes to ensure its continued stability, and work to ensure that the facility is operational to its full potential. The committee have worked hard over the last couple of years to ensure stability and transparency, establishing clear procedures, well defined roles and ensuring that they, as a committee are informed, appropriately experienced and accountable.

*"I think the roles are a lot more clearly defined now than they ever were ...
Procedures have been put in place to ensure that they know what to expect*

of that role, whereas before it was like word of mouth, handed down. Now we have a book of procedures and who is responsible for those. We have standing orders now so that the decisions that have been made will be carried through, so it doesn't matter who picks up the chair, there is a standing order book ... we've got the maintenance book, the checklist for the yearly regulatory requirements ... we've got electronic banking set up with the approval system really tight. With the committee there is really good governance in that area as well, better than we have ever had it ... We have a professional accountant now who runs the books, because it is so complex it is not suitable for anyone that doesn't have the training in that area to be able to do. There are two of us now that have that capacity."

Regent Theatre Committee of Management members

There is also a Friends of the Theatre group from which volunteers are drawn. This, along with many other aspects, has suffered as the Manager's hours have been reduced in the past year and she does not have the capacity to nurture it.

There are no facility usage statistics at the time of compiling this report, although a lot of information was gathered in conversation with the Manager and Committee members. Arts related usage includes: live music, workshops, theatre, films, live telecasts, dance classes and social dancing, eisteddfods, art shows and use during festivals. Non arts related usage includes: exercise and fitness classes, exams, conferences and meetings, conventions, weddings, parties, tourism tours and special occasions like the Anzac Day ceremony, or an ABC broadcast after the fires. Some non-arts activities, such as conventions and conferences, draw people from across the state.

The facility caters for the local community (ie, town and school), the broader local community (ie, Woodside and Port Albert), the wider Gippsland community, and even a Melbourne contingent with its range of activities. Locally they also have a range of activities that suit everyone from teenagers to retirees; there is a large part of the market that have disabilities and the range of rooms and seating options within the facility can accommodate this.

The space works particularly well for live music, catering for events from small, intimate candlelit gatherings on the mezzanine (such as the Café Concert series) to large blockbusters such as Jimmy Barnes (660 audience) or Shannon Noll (500). The upper area tends to service older people, or those with children, while the downstairs area allows for dancing. When presenting large live music acts the Regent confine themselves to ones that are exclusive to Gippsland, ensuring they draw an audience from Bairnsdale to Phillip Island and Melbourne. The Welsh Choir draws many from Melbourne and beyond. This has a beneficial flow on effect for the town with motels and caravan parks often being booked out and the pub serving 200 meals on the

night. If there is a risk element (ie on a weeknight rather than a weekend) then the committee will ensure it is a hire or door-split arrangement.

“... So you know you might bring 400 people in to town and they might all spend \$100 each. And people are going to spend more than that if they’ve spent \$80 - \$100 on accommodation, then they are going to spend \$20 - \$30 on meals and drinks: other than the ticket money. Then before they go home they go back to the bakery in the morning.”

“...it would be really valuable to do some sort of survey of how much money people spend – what the Regent’s economic benefit to the town is. I think it would be just huge. And that is another part of the Regent’s uniqueness, above and beyond a traditional small hall. There is just no equivalent around here of anything that does that.”

Regent Theatre Committee of Management members

The Committee and Manager would like to continue to develop a close working relationship with the Entertainment Centre in Sale. They currently utilise tech assistance and see the potential for greater collaboration, possibly in the area of scheduled transport to support audiences wishing to attend performances in both towns. They do not see themselves in competition with EBBWEC, rather both facilities offer opportunities which the other cannot – for example dance in Sale and blockbuster music concerts in Yarram. Travel is the main issue impacting audiences travelling from one town to another at night and private groups in both communities have previously chartered buses in order to overcome this.

Local musicians also use the facility, as do the school for musical events.

“There have been kids that have grown up in Yarram and gone on to be involved with bands that then come back and perform. We had one not long ago called The Roast which was a few boys that grew up in Yarram. They are in a 7 piece funk jazz band. And that was sort of a family affair in a way, they wanted to release their CD in a family setting. But we had 200 people and it was a fantastic night.”

Regent Theatre Manager

Some performers have also provided workshops for the community; these include OzOpera, Bell Shakespeare and Cosantino the Magician. Other workshops have been provided by local presenters such as Kline or FAMDA.

Theatre performances have been by locals, as above, as well as by larger companies such as Hit Productions. These include Menopause the Musical (560 audience) and The Club (260). The theatre does not have a sprung floor so are not able to present dance, although there is a strong interest in social dancing and dance eisteddfods (rock & roll, old time and contemporary dance). The Rock & Roll Eisteddfod draws people from across the state and lasts for 5 or 6 days. There is also a regular Old Time Dance on Sunday nights which attracts 40 – 50 locals.

During the Easter Tarra Festival the Regent is used to display the art show; this attracts 4,000 – 5,000 people to the venue. It is hired by Rotary, who also made specialised lighting and stands for the art show; these are now available to the community. The Gardening Expo also includes sculpture and glassware, by local and other artists.

The Regent was one of eight theatres across Australia invited to be part of an experimental project with Screen Australia which finished in 2009. This involved presenting an Australian film, as close to its release date as possible, in a digital format. The project was very successful from an audience perspective and the facility has been able to retain the satellite receiver and digital projector for it's ongoing use. They still do a few events each year with ABC2; Cosi Fan Tuttu, The Nutcracker and Swan Lake. ABC2 hire the facility for those nights.

“The Nutcracker and Swan Lake were beautiful nights. We got the local ballet school to hand round hor d’eauves and so we made a bit of a community effort out of it.”

Regent Theatre Manager

The Regent still shows some films (35mm) but this can be problematic and has been identified as an area on which to focus. Six years ago there was a regular monthly movie. When the current Manager commenced they established the Friday Flicks, which quickly grew to be something that the community looked forward to. However it wasn't always profitable at a base cost of \$260 - \$340 for film hire plus a projectionist at \$80 (when one was available). They needed to run mainstream films to ensure the audience, but weren't able to access them until six weeks after their release, which would then affect their audience. In the last year they have not been able to run them as regularly, in order to ensure that the ones they did run always covered costs. This has become a bit of a vicious cycle; when the Friday Flicks are no longer every Friday, it is harder for the community, as a whole, to support it. So the ones that rely on it, such as teenagers, end up missing out.

“It became a habit with people and it was great for teenagers in town that don't have a lot to do. We got the same teenagers that would come through every Friday. They would see anything! ... And it is something that I know the community has missed ... most of the films these days are aimed at a teenage audience, a lot of the blockbuster American films. They want to see

them and there is no transport out of Yarram. So they can't get to the Village in Morwell, or to Sale to go and see films. So it's either us, or they have to rely on someone to drive them. So yes, I think it is filling a gap, definitely."

Regent Theatre Manager

The Regent's main income stream is their operating subsidy (\$31,400), which goes towards the utility costs and maintenance (approx \$40,00pa). The profit margins from events go towards the Manager's wages. They also rely on fundraising and sponsorship – \$17,000 was donated through local business sponsorship last year. The committee state that 90% of the time, the arts and cultural events are income generating for the facility and generally they receive greater profits from the higher cost activities: \$10,000 was taken in profit from the Jimmy Barnes concert.

"If it wasn't for private businesses in this town this year we wouldn't have presented anything! And in a way that's not fair. It's not fair on that business that put their hand up for it ... when you see that the shire own the building – Wellington Shire is on the door – and the operating subsidy all goes to utilities ... It just keeps the building sitting there ...it keeps it structural but not cultural."

Regent Theatre Manager

Apart from their visions of stability and full operations, the committee also wish to address some maintenance issues: the heating system, disability access to the supper room/toilets, an overhaul of the lighting and sound systems. The main and over-riding issue however is support for the Manager's position.

"Due to the uniqueness of the hall, it is too large and complicated for a volunteer committee to do all the necessary roles. Without a Manager there the whole show is going to collapse. We have some really good people on the committee, we have some great expertise on there now and we just need to be able to maintain a Manager to be able to keep the hall."

"I feel like it is the heart of Yarram. It's quite a unique thing for a town. It is figuratively in the heart, and I think in people's minds it is the heart in a lot of ways ... it is not something you would want to see if it was boarded up in the heart of town ... that's the sort of thing that tears the guts out of places."

Regent Theatre Committee of Management members

Yarram Mechanics Hall

Yarram Mechanics Hall is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 hall and there is a lease in place with the Guides Association and the Scouts Association. This gives them sole use of the facility and there is no subsidy. It is not considered a Public Hall.

According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 166 events at the hall, one of which was arts related: a school disco. Other users included the hall committee, guides, Southern Tae Kwondo, the Primary School, the Coastal Group and various private users.

Port Albert

Population: 248

Median age: 53 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$541 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Port Albert is 13 kms from Yarram, 76 kms from Sale, 76 kms from Traralgon and 51 kms from Foster. Port Albert is largely serviced through Yarram.

Port Albert Mechanics Institute Hall

Port Albert Mechanics Institute is owned by Council and managed via a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an L&SA in place. Through this the hall receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07, 2007/08 & 2009/10.

Other community infrastructure: Port Albert

Galleries, libraries, theatres, museums

Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum.

Community, Educational and Sporting facilities

Port Albert Racecourse Reserve.

Service and similar groups include:

Port Albert Social Club.

Other

Historically significant town and port, as well as specific buildings. Rocket shed with displays, the Wharf, Old Port Trail, The General Store (art), Warren Curry gallery/studio

See also Yarram cultural information

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 121 events in the hall, one of which was arts related: an arts show. Other users included a Weight loss group, exercise group, progress Association, calisthenics practice, the hall committee and various private users.

In 2009 there were 68 events, one of which was arts related: an arts show. Other users were very similar to the previous year.

Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum

Gippsland Regional Maritime Museum is owned by Council and managed by a Management Committee. There is an L&SA in place with Council through which the museum receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08, 2008/09 & 2009/10.

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were approximately 300 events, all of which were arts related. These are all days when it is open to the public.

Devon North

Population: 592

Median age: 45 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$993 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Devon North is 9 kms from Yarram, 80 kms from Sale and 55 kms from Traralgon.

Devon North Hall

Devon North Hall is owned and managed by Council through a Management Committee. There is an L&SA in place with Council through which the facility receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2006/07 & 2009/10. The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen and toilets.

According to WSC data, in 2009 there were 44 events at the hall. The records are unclear but it appears that 39 of these were art or craft related: a weekly sewing group, 2 or 3 craft days and a school concert. Other users included the Australian Electoral Office, CFA and various private users.

Other community infrastructure: Devon North

Primary School, Recreation reserve, CFA.

See also Yarram cultural information

A number of community groups use the hall including a craft group, Red Cross, and the CFA. The Community Recovery committee has received approval from VBAF for funding of some improvements including: A new kitchen; a uni-sex shower room; re-surfacing of the hall floor; a pergola on the east wall; a small verandah and window awning.

As stated in their application to the VBAF, the community sees this upgrade as important and believe that with these improvements the hall can become a hub for the community. It will have the potential to be a venue for functions and events within the locality.

Woodside

Population: 267

Median age: 47 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$743 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Woodside is 20 kms from Yarram, 51 kms from Sale and 64 kms from Traralgon.

Woodside Hall

Woodside Hall is owned and managed by Council through a Management Committee. There is an L&SA in place with Council through which the facility receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee.

The facility consists of a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen, storage and toilets. There are no facility usage statistics at the time of compiling this report.

Other community infrastructure: Woodside *Community, Educational and Sporting facilities*

*Primary School, Recreation Reserve,
Netball Courts.*

Sporting Clubs include:

*Surf lifesavings (Woodside Beach),
Football, Netball.*

Service and similar groups include:

CFA.

Other

Beach, Hotel, Caravan Park.

Tarraville

Tarraville is 12 kms from Yarram, 70 kms from Sale and 51 kms from Foster.

Tarraville Living History Museum

Tarraville Living History Museum is on Crown land and is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. There is a FA in place through which the management committee receive \$546.

According to WSC data, in 2007 there were 16 events at the facility, one of which was arts related, involving preparation for the Tarra Festival. Other users included Robertson's Beach Progress Association and the Tarraville committee.

Other community infrastructure: Tarraville

Community, Educational and Sporting facilities

Recreation Reserve.

Service and similar groups include:

CRG.

Other

Town is of historical significance. Church is of historical significance (built with no nails), Alda Cross Festival.

Yarram & outer district

Wonyip, Stacey's Bridge, Bingenwarri, Won Wron, Mann's Beach, Macks Creek, Giffard West.

Wonyip

Population: not available

Median age: not available

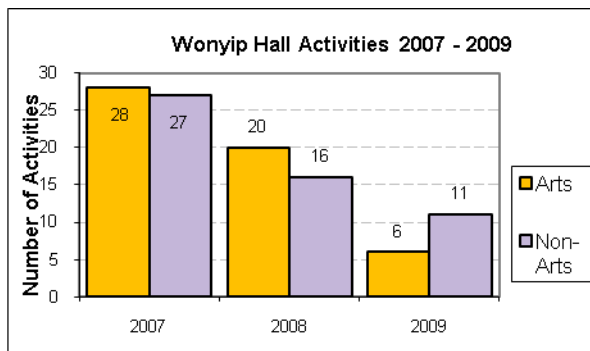
Median weekly household income: not available

Wonyip is 29 kms from Yarram, 99 kms from Sale, 70 kms from Traralgon and 29 kms from Foster.

Wonyip Hall

Wonyip Hall is owned and managed by DSE through the Wonyip Excelsior Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

Other community infrastructure: Wonyip
Landcare, local history group.



According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 36 events at the hall, 20 of which were arts or culture related. These were mainly heritage focussed such as the local history group, Yarram Historical Society and family history enthusiasts as well as a music day. Other users included Landcare and the facility committee.

In 2009 there were 17 events, 6 of which were arts / heritage related: meetings of the local history group. Other users included the Wonyip Excelsior committee, Yarram Probus Group, DSE and Landcare.

Staceys Bridge

Population: not available

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Staceys Bridge is 16 kms from Yarram, 87 kms from Sale, 64 kms from Traralgon and 39 kms from Foster.

Staceys Bridge Hall

Staceys Bridge Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 19 events, none of which were arts related. Users included CFA, Landcare, Australian Electoral Commission and various private users. In 2009 there were 15 events, one of which was arts related: a bush dance. Other users included CFA, the facility committee and various private users.

Binginwarri

Population: 103

Median age: 52 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: \$632 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Binginwarri is 25 kms from Yarram, 95 kms from Sale, 68 kms from Traralgon and 32 kms from Foster.

Binginwarri Hall

Binginwarri Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

Other community infrastructure: Binginwarri
*Cricket Club, Recreation Reserve,
Landcare, Friendship Group.*

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 13 events at the hall, 2 of which were arts related: Carols and another music evening. Other users included the Church and a Friendship Group. In 2009 there were 13 events, none of which were arts related. Users included Landcare, a Friendship Group and the general community for an Australia Day BBQ.

Won Wron

Population: 257

Median age: 43 compared with 37 in Australia

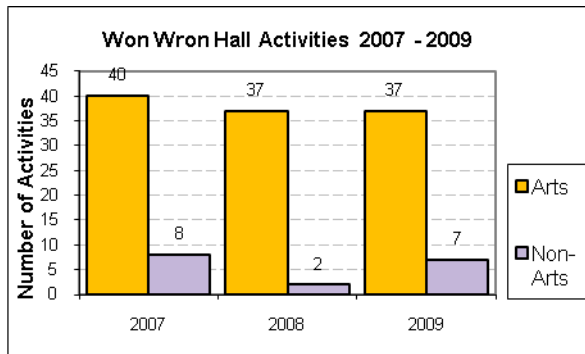
Median weekly household income: \$749 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Other community infrastructure: Won Wron
*Recreation Reserve, Won Wron Rockers,
Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place.*

Won Wron is 15 kms from Yarram, 80 kms from Sale, 48 kms from Traralgon and 66 kms from Foster.

Won Wron Hall

Won Wron Hall is owned and managed by Council through a Management Committee. There is an L&SA in place with Council through which the facility receives \$650 for admin and operations, less a \$104 licence fee. The facility also received financial support through the Building Audit Program in 2007/08.



The facility consists of a main hall with stage, kitchen, storage and toilets. According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 39 events at the hall, 37 of which were arts related: 35 dance classes and 2 dance performances. Other users included the Australian Electoral Commission and a private user.

In 2009 there were 44 events, 37 of which were arts related: again 36 dance classes and 1 performance. Other users included the general community (for a bushfire get-together), the hall committee and various private users.

Manns Beach

Population: 135

Median age: 50 compared with 37 in Australia

Median weekly household income: 443 compared with \$1,027 in Australia

Manns Beach is 18 kms from Yarram, 73 kms from Sale, 81 kms from Traralgon and 55 kms from Foster.

Manns Beach Hall

Manns Beach hall is owned by DSE. WSC is a Crown appointed Committee of Management. There is no other committee for the hall and no funding agreement. It is managed in a de-facto relationship by the Manns Beach Progress Association.

Other community infrastructure: Manns Beach
Frys Reserve (Recreation reserve, Beach).

According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 17 events at the hall, none of which were arts related.

Other information

The Manns Beach Community Plan was launched in 2007. It's vision states: *"Manns Beach will remain a small, remote holiday hamlet, bordered by the Nooramunga Marine and Wildlife Reserve with excellent access to local islands and inlets. It will retain a strong recreational fishing focus for residents and the surrounding area with attractive and functional foreshore facilities. Buildings will improve over time, but retain the 'coastal cottage' character. The foreshore will be easily accessed on foot and will be enhanced as a community hub."* Priorities include improvements and maintenance of the hall, such as re-cladding, replacing tanks, re-stumping. These all appear to be in hand at the time of finalising this report.

Mack's Creek

Population: not available

Median age: not available

Median weekly household income: not available

Mack's Creek is 14 kms from Yarram, 84 kms from Sale, 45 kms from Traralgon and 65 kms from Foster.

Mack's Creek

Mack's Creek Hall is owned and managed by DSE. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.

The facility consists of a main hall, kitchen and toilets. According to WSC data, in 2009 there were three events, none of which were arts related. Users included Yarram Secondary College and various private users.

Giffard West

Population: not available

Median age: not available

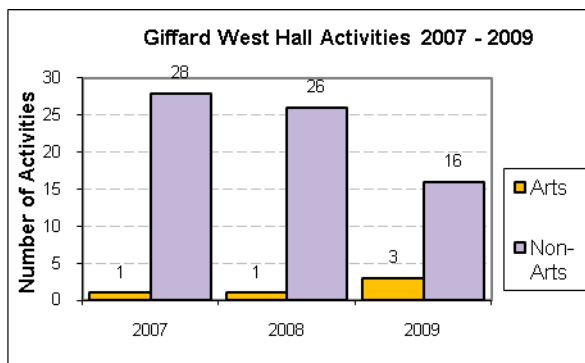
Median weekly household income: not available

Other community infrastructure: Giffard West
CFA, CWA.

Giffard West is 40 kms from Yarram and 34 kms from Sale.

Giffard West Hall

Giffard West Hall is owned and managed by DSE through a Management Committee. It is a Level 3 facility and there is an FA in place through which the committee receives \$546 from Council.



According to WSC data, in 2008 there were 27 events, 1 of which was arts related: a children's craft day. Other users included CWA, CFA, VFF, the hall committee, the Uniting Church and Greening Australia.

In 2009 there were 19 events, three of which were arts related: two children's craft days and an oral history day. Other users included the VFF,

CWA, Greening Australia, the Uniting church and the general community for a Christmas dinner.

Appendix 1: Glossary of common terms and abbreviations

AEC: Australian Electoral Commission

BSFA: Briagolong School of Fine Art

CAS: Cultural Activity Subsidy

CFA: Country Fire Authority

CoM: Committee of Management

CRC: Community Recovery Committee

CRG: Community Representative Group

DDF: Dargo Design Framework

DSE: Department of Sustainability and Environment

FA: Funding Agreement (WSC)

FAMDA: Foster Amateur Dramatics Association

GAL: Guarantee Against Loss. GAL 2 is administered by Arts Victoria & GAL 1 is administered by Regional Arts Victoria. GAL 1 is a funding program to assist community managed venues to present one off performances in their town, by performing artists from outside the area.

GRAS: Gippsland Regional Arts Sale

L&SA: Licence and Service Agreement

Level 1 facility, current definition:

These facilities have, or have the potential, to generate sufficient revenue to be substantially self funding; which do, or could, provide for State, Regional or Shire wide events on a reasonably regular basis; and provide a range of cultural and/or recreational opportunities.

Level 2 facility, current definition:

These facilities do not have the capacity to generate sufficient revenue to be substantially self-funding. These facilities do, or could, provide for district or Shire wide events on a reasonably regular basis and provide a range of cultural and/or recreational opportunities

Level 3 facility, current definition:

These facilities provide for local events on a reasonably regular basis and provide limited cultural and/or recreational opportunities. As such, these facilities are considered to be the primary responsibility of the local community to manage, maintain and operate

OS: Operating Subsidy

RADO: Regional Arts Development Officer

RAV: Regional Arts Victoria

SA: Service Agreement

VAPAC: Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres

VBAF: Victorian Bushfire Assistance Fund

VFF: Victorian Farmers Federation

WSC: Wellington Shire Council

WVN: Wellington Venues Network

