

Case Study : Small Cultural Facilities Review

This research and consultation project, undertaken by Wellington RADO Deb Milligan in 2009 /2010, explores ways in which Wellington Shire Council can better support communities holding cultural activities in halls and other small venues



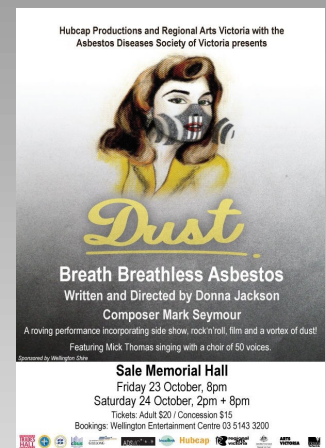
FevaPitch CD launch at Briagolong Hall

The Small Cultural Facilities Review covers 56 small facilities spread across the Shire and its 41 towns. These facilities are predominantly public halls but also includes a gallery, a theatre and a number of small museums.

The review includes a locality based presentation of findings whereby the Shire is divided into 10 districts, based on geography and community usage patterns. It presents cultural mapping 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. There is then more detailed information 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 in the facility.



Big Screen Film Festival



“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

Nine facilities are also presented as in-depth Case Studies. The information in the case studies is largely drawn from intensive ‘structured conversations’ that Deb held with the management committee or other stakeholder. These were chosen based on: the level and type of arts and cultural activity; the type of facility; their interaction within their communities; and geographic spread, in order to present a wide range of cultural and operational situations to Council.

Finally a range of scoping options are explored covering three themes of potential assistance. These include:

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



Yarram Courthouse Gallery

This comprehensive report will be presented to Council shortly along with recommendations drawn from it by the Manager of the Cultural Services Unit. Regardless of which options are taken up for action by Council the document will be a useful reference and planning guide for years to come.