

MINUTES OF ARTS AND CULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 5 MAY 2025

- Present: Councillor Indu Balachandran, (Chairperson)
Councillor Barbara Ward (Deputy Chairperson)
Mayor Councillor, Christine Kay
Councillor Matt Devlin
- Tony Bates, Community Member
Wendy Blaxland, Community Member
Michelle Cahill, Community Member
Andrea Doney, Community Member
Mary Faith, Community Member
Hong Huang, Community Member
Shipra Shah, Community Member
- Staff Present: Director Community, Janice Bevan
Manager Library Services, Michelle Swan-Beardmore
Manager Visitor Experience and Events, Melanie Morson
Project and Policy Officer, Community Development, Nick Goryl
Marketing and Programs Lead, Library and Art Centre, Samantha Groth
- Others Present: Peter Whitehead, substituting for Dee Jackson
Giselle Beale, Marian Street Theatre for Young People
- Apologies: James Austen, Community Member
Anne Cahill, Community Member
Dee Jackson, Community Member
Jonathan Karanikas, Community Member

The Meeting commenced at 5:30 PM

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interest was declared.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

NOTING OF MINUTES

Minutes of Arts and Culture Committee

File: S14328

Meeting held 17 February 2025

Minutes numbered AACCC01 to AACCC06

RECOMMENDATION:

That Minutes numbered AACCC01 to AACCC06 circulated to Councillors were taken as read and confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings of the Meeting.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Ku-ring-gai Art Centre

File: S14328

Vide: GB.1

To provide members with an overview of upcoming programs and exhibitions at the Ku-ring-gai Art Centre

Sam Groth, Marketing and Programs Lead, Library and Art Centre, Ku-ring-gai Council

- Sam provided updates on new courses including expanded offerings in pottery, drawing, printmaking, and Chinese calligraphy.
- The growing demand for evening and holiday programs was attracting broader community participation.
- The current exhibition 'Portraits of the Past' is presented in partnership with Ku-ring-gai Art Society, and is part of the 2025 Heritage Festival.
- Upcoming events include an open day showcasing tutor and student work and a family workshop during the Gai-Mariagal Festival.
- Enrolment for 2025 has exceeded 1,500 across various programs.

The Centre will continue community engagement efforts and promote upcoming term 3 programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

For members to receive and note the update of programs and exhibitions at the Ku-ring-gai Art Centre.

Arts and Cultural Events Update

File: S14328

Vide: GB.2

To provide members with an update on Arts and Cultural events in Ku-ring-gai.

Melanie Morson, Manager Visitor Experience and Events, Ku-ring-gai Council

Gai-Mariagal Festival – 26 May – 13 July 2025

- Melanie provided an update on the Gai-Mariagal Festival – a major First Nations cultural event with regional recognition.
- The Festival spans Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week, and NAIDOC Week and programs include sand painting, bush food wellness workshops, and children's cultural activities.
- The individual Festival programs are very popular and they are often fully booked.

Arts and Cultural Festival – 18 June – 24 July, 2025

- The 2025 Arts and Cultural Festival is currently in the planning phase.
- The focus of the Festival will be to showcase local talent, expand partnerships, and develop cross-genre events.
- The committee members have been invited to participate through the distribution of promotional materials and raising awareness of the Festival.

Action: For staff to share festival links and promotional assets with the committee and to finalise the Expression of Interest (EOI) materials.

RECOMMENDATION:

That committee members receive and note the update on Arts and Culture events in Ku-ring-gai.

Arts and Cultural Forum 2025

File: S14328

Vide: GB.3

For the committee to discuss the proposal to hold an Arts Cultural Forum in 2025.

Melanie Morson, Manager Visitor Experience and Events, Ku-ring-gai Council

- Melanie proposed a concept for a new *Creative Connect* initiative to launch during the Arts and Cultural Festival 2025.
- The purpose of *Creative Connect* will be to foster collaboration between local creatives, cultural organisations, and arts/cultural educators.
- The aim is to include a broad range of art and cultural disciplines including visual arts, music, literature, digital media, performance, and heritage.
- It is proposed that the forum be held at the Gordon library on 25 July, with registrations open to anyone living or working in the arts within Ku-ring-gai.
- It was also suggested that the forum include stronger youth engagement, venue partnerships, historical integration, and audience voices.
- The committee members supported the concept of an arts cultural forum and endorsed the progression of its planning.

RECOMMENDATION:

- For committee members to receive and note the proposal for an Arts and Cultural forum
- For Council staff to further develop the *Creative Connect* concept and share plans with the Committee for feedback;
- For staff to explore ambassador roles for committee members at the forum.

Committee Membership resignations

File: S14328

Vide: GB.4

For the committee to note the decline in membership numbers of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee and consider options for meetings and membership.

- The Chair shared observations about attendance and engagement at recent meetings, with a quorum only narrowly achieved at the current meeting.
- There was discussion around attrition, replacement mechanisms, and ensuring active representation from key arts organisations.
- Committee members discussed the format of meetings and it was noted that agenda items are sought from committee members before the agenda is set for each meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

- That the Chair and staff review the current membership and the attendance patterns of members over the past meetings.
- Staff will check Terms of Reference and validate current membership and initiate outreach to current members as needed.

Grants and Funding opportunities

File: S14328

Vide: GB.5

To advise committee members of current grants and funding opportunities.

- Funding updates from Create NSW were circulated prior to the meeting.
- The update highlighted several timely opportunities for local artists and arts organisations.
- Council staff will continue to distribute grant notifications to Committee members and encourage application where applicable.

- The Grants Finder on Council's website can also be used:
<https://www.krg.nsw.gov.au/Council/Grants-and-sponsorship/Grants-locator-database>

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Arts and Culture Committee receive and note the grant and funding opportunities.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- Giselle Beale, representing the Marian Street Theatre for Young People (MSTYP) attended as a guest. Ms Beale advised that the MSTYP was facing financial difficulties that threaten its future, and that she has taken on the voluntary role General Manager for the next 6 weeks. It was noted that Ku-ring-gai Council has provided MSTYP with ongoing financial support since the closure of the Marian Street Theatre.
- Committee members requested stronger committee engagement in setting agendas for future meetings and committee members were encouraged to take the opportunity to propose agenda items prior to each meeting.

The Meeting closed at 19:04