

Narooma moves ahead with Arts & Community Centre plans

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Above: The rear of the proposed Narooma Arts & Community Centre, with the current School of Arts Studios (cottage), left, and the back of the Kinema, right. Preliminary drawing by ClarkeKeller.

Consensus at a recent meeting of potential users supported Narooma School of Arts moving ahead with its plans for an Arts & Community Centre next to the Kinema. Several speakers said, 'Narooma needs it'.

Spokesperson Laurelle Pacey said the volunteer School of Arts committee was delighted that more than 60 people attended with most expressing the strong view that the committee should proceed with the plans.

"We will meet in the New Year to consider how to best move the plans forward, including dealing with some concerns raised at that meeting," she said.

Plans for the Centre were developed over almost 10 years to provide larger but flexible purpose-built arts spaces in Narooma that could also be used by the community well into the future. The plans include three studio/workshops/meeting rooms and a large exhibition gallery with highway frontage.

"These plans were developed between the School of Arts, many artists including members of Montague Arts & Craft Society, and the selected architect, with some input from Council," she said.

The School of Arts site which includes the Kinema, SoART Gallery and the Studios (red cottage) is owned and managed by the people of Narooma through the School of Arts organisation.

“The site is not owned by Council or the NSW Government; land here has been owned by the Narooma community for over 120 years.” Ms Pacey said.

“The School of Arts has spent over \$30,000 on plans to date, and members and many artists have spent about 2,000 hours researching and developing the plans. Other value-in-kind contributions have been made, so all up, our community including the monetary value of those VIK hours, has already invested over \$100,000 in this project.”

The volunteer School of Arts management committee put plans for the Centre to one side a few years ago while it concentrated on renovating the Kinema and enhancing it as a venue for live performances.

“The combined project is about enhancing the site for the Arts in its broadest sense,” Ms Pacey said. “With the Kinema project completed, the committee wanted feedback from the community about whether it should now go ahead with those Centre plans to consolidate the site as Narooma’s arts hub. We needed to know it would be used.

“So we invited to the meeting various artists who might hold workshops or classes, groups we thought might be interested in using such a facility, as well as other community groups who might be interested in being across these plans.”



Above: Narooma School of arts committee member Bob Aston and the independent meeting facilitator Ian Campbell.