

# Ku-ring-gai Council Cultural Plan 2004 - 2009

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# Introduction

Ku-ring-gai Council on Sydney's north shore has demonstrated an active but low key commitment to cultural development over the past decade. Like most councils it supports a range of traditional cultural services and facilities such as libraries, festivals, ceremonies, community centres and the management and maintenance of open space and sporting amenities. During the 1990s, Council adopted a Cultural Policy (1997) as well as a Public Art Policy (1998) and in 2002, it commissioned a Cultural Review.

Specialist staff provide Council with objective and expert arts and cultural advice and cultural strategies have been integrated into the suite of Council's planning instruments including the Management Plan, the State of the Environment Report, the Social Plan and the Local Environment Plan.

Now Council is reviewing its role in cultural development and revising its Cultural Plan. This Project recognises the fundamental role that culture plays in the lives of the Ku-ring-gai community and also acknowledges that culture is a core component of Council's business taking its place alongside programs and activities related to the environment, economic development and social/community development. The Cultural Plan reflects the changing needs of the Ku-ring-gai community and provides direction to Council in the provision of resources in a competitive environment. This review therefore will assist Council to identify strategic directions in the broad area of culture and will foster the integration of those strategies into Council's planning frameworks. It is a 'living' document - reflecting community needs and aspirations whilst at the same time providing an ongoing blueprint for Ku-ring-gai's cultural life over the next 5 years. The title "Living Culture" presents opportunities to harness the energy, ideas and commitment of Council and the community to establish Ku-ring-gai as a recognised leader in community cultural activity.

The Cultural Plan project has been presented in three volumes. Volume 1 includes the presentation of key planning issues, a snapshot of Ku-ring-gai's cultural assets and resources, the cultural policy framework including a cultural vision and planning principles and the Cultural Plan with goals, strategies and actions linked to timeframes and performance indicators. Volume 2 incorporates background information including history, heritage, facility and service background, ABS 2001 Census data and survey and workshop qualitative and quantitative data. Volume 3 includes maps representing the scale and location of cultural resources across the Local Government Area (LGA). These include heritage items, commercial cultural services, parks, schools, community cultural facilities and scouts and guide halls.



The Secret Garden, Gordon Library (Mosaic work by Suzanne Holman. Bronze panel by Hal Holman)

# Introduction

## Methodology

This Plan has been developed based on research and analysis of key documents and reports including the 2001 Census of Population and Housing. It has also been informed by comprehensive community consultation including the following:

Ku-ring-gai Multicultural Forum, November 2003

Community consultations focus group workshops, November - December 2003

Telephone surveys, October 2003

Cultural Development Plan Surveys, November 2003 - January 2004

Community facilities survey, November 2003

Online survey, November - January 2004

Feedback and responses were received from over 1000 people including 103 respondents to the online survey. The focus group workshops included selected target groups including arts and cultural organizations, individual artists and cultural businesses; youth; Council staff; general community; representatives of community organisations and culturally diverse groups and individuals.

The consultations contributed to the development of key planning issues relating to cultural activities and facilities including the identification of community needs in the area of cultural development.



**Design Competition, Australia Day 2003**

The draft Plan was presented to a briefing meeting of Councillors for feedback and the Plan was subsequently revised to reflect comment. The revised draft Plan was circulated to Councillors and senior staff prior to finalisation in September 2004.

# Defining Our Terms

Many of the terms referred to in this Plan are amongst the most contested in the English language. Although recent research indicates that most Australians are generally aware that culture is more than the arts, nevertheless research also recognises that the term "culture" can mean different things to different audiences including to different communities.

## What is Culture?

Council's 1997 Cultural Policy provides a precise statement about what culture is in the Ku-ring-gai environment. It states that:

"Culture is an expression of the values a society applies in defining its place in the world. Culture arises from a community's understanding of what makes it distinctive. It encompasses a community's way of life, its institutions, its manners, routines and principles. Culture is represented by the things we value including aesthetic, moral, social, historical, intellectual, recreational and spiritual expressions of our community.

Culture is also understood by the value we attach to our environment, history, leisure activities, creative endeavours, work and education. Culture is what we value. This is often expressed through the natural and built environment, architecture and the arts and notions of what a community wishes to preserve and celebrate."

In planning for Ku-ring-gai's cultural future aspects of interculturalism, tourism and heritage including Indigenous heritage have been included in the planning process. The following revised definition of culture provides a foundation for the development of the 2004 - 2009 Cultural Plan:

In Ku-ring-gai, culture is represented by the things that are valued by the community including aesthetic, moral, social, historical, intellectual, recreational and spiritual expressions that make our community distinct.



Greenswell Skate Challenge, 2004

Culture is also understood by the value we attach to our environment, history and heritage including our Indigenous heritage, creative and artistic endeavours including production as well as appreciation, leisure and education. Culture is often expressed through the natural and built environment including architecture and design, the arts, festivals and celebrations, interculturalism and aspects of tourism, sport and recreation and the media.

# Defining Our Terms

## Cultural Development

Cultural development can be defined as those actions contributing to cultural vitality. Cultural development therefore involves numerous council functions not only the arts, entertainment and cultural programs but also community services and facilities, urban and landscape design, heritage conservation, parks and recreation, planning and development controls.

Cultural development offers all members of the community the opportunity for creative expression, enhanced social networks and a sense of inclusion through the planned utilization of the arts and other activities that promote improvements in quality of life and community well-being.



Festival on the Green 2004, St Ives Village Green

## Cultural Planning

Council's 1997 Cultural Policy defined cultural planning as

"the ongoing, purposeful, strategic approach to cultural development which uses community participation and consultation to develop strategies in response to local conditions, expectations, strengths and weaknesses. It acknowledges cultural diversity, enabling the community to learn from and enjoy culturally diverse experiences including music, dance, food, displays, languages, visual arts etc."

Building on this definition, the recent NSW Ministry for the Arts Cultural Planning Guidelines define cultural planning as

"a strategic process which illuminates and gives significance to the values, material and process dimensions of culture in a community in a way which informs a council's thinking, policies and programs."

# Defining Our Terms

## Public Art

In December 1998 Council adopted a public art policy aimed at guiding and encouraging the exhibition and inclusion of art within public places, ensuring the valued characteristics are enhanced. For this policy, public art has been defined as

"encompassing all forms of art including: The visual arts such as painting, sculpture, mosaic, monuments, crafts or specially designed and/or crafted objects aimed at enhancing the built environment as part of urban design.

A range of performing arts such as music, song, mime, dance, street theatre etc."

In Ku-ring-gai, public art relates only to art that is located in a 'public place'. A public place is defined as an indoor or outdoor space that is owned and or/ managed by Council for use by the broad community. This could include, but is not limited to, a park, road reserve, streetscape of community building (e.g. library, community hall etc).

As a general principle, public art refers to art works created by professional artists located outside the gallery context in indoor or outdoor environments. Public art is also site specific (i.e. it should relate and respond to the social, historical, environmental and physical context of the site). It can include functional works such as street furniture, bollards, paving and signage etc.



*Don Quixote, Wahroonga (Artist: Diana Hunt)*

# Cultural Assets and Resources Inventory

The following Table provides a general summary of the cultural assets and resources that contribute to Ku-ring-gai's cultural environment. The information has been collected from a variety of sources including Council records, telephone directories, online sources and from commissioned research.

Cultural Resource Category	Number	Description/Source/Comment
1. Cultural industry workers	1491	ABS 2001 Census data relating to resident employment in the cultural and leisure sector.
2. Cultural holdings/collections	3	Council Art collection (253 items), special collections including Library's local studies collection, Cavalcade of Fashion collection. It is likely that there are more collections e.g. archives, art, memorabilia etc. More research is needed.
3. Restaurants/cafes	111	83 restaurants, 18 cafes
4. Galleries/ Art Centre and museums	1 Art Centre with gallery 3 House Museums	Public galleries. Rose Seidler House, Eryldene Garden & Tulkiyan House.
5. Voluntary non-profit associations	836	Community groups, societies, organisations etc.
6. Cultural businesses	145	Antique shops, art supplies, ballet schools, music schools, commercial galleries etc.
7. Ethnic cultural organisations	2	Chinese Womens' Group; French support group. More research needed.
8. Education organisations	117	Schools, TAFE, universities.
9. Fairs, festivals, events	38	Community based, also council managed.
10. Community centres	11	Seniors facilities, youth centres, community halls.
11. Religious organisations	58	Churches, venues for worship.
12. Media organisations	44	Advertising agencies, publishers, clippings services etc.
13. Historic or heritage items	Local 700 + 1 conservation area. State 119. 67 Indigenous heritage sites	Items on national, State, local heritage lists. Indigenous sites listed with NPWS.
14. Cultural tourism resources	12	Venues, walks, attractions e.g. historic houses, tracks, waterways (Bobbin Head), gardens. More research needed.
15. Cultural artefact	32	Monuments
16. Reserve, park, open space, garden	374 Council maintained. 4 Private Gardens	Public open space, private gardens that are open to the public.
17. Public Art	14	Fourteen external public art projects.
18. Indigenous cultural organisations	1	Reconciliation Committee
19. Performing arts venues	3	Theatres - Marian Street, Pymble Players Theatre, Ravenswood School Theatre
20. Technology access	76	Internet cafes, media skills development courses.
21. Directory/databases	3	Library catalogue, community information database, KAN database
23. Sports facilities	170	Netball courts, tennis courts, golf courses, playing fields, pool.

# Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

The following issues were highlighted in research and consultation associated with the development of this Plan. They highlight community concerns in the broad area of culture and cultural development and provide direction for the strategic objectives of the cultural plan. Planning issues can also provide information on gaps in provision of cultural services and program and establish an improved understanding of strengths and weaknesses in service delivery.



Midsummer Music in the Park 2004, Wahroonga Park

## Community Well-being and Demographic Character



Festival on the Green 2004, St Ives Village Green

The 2001 Census of Population and Housing provides snapshot data for the Local Government Area. Since 1996 Ku-ring-gai's population has grown by 2314 or 2.3% and in 2001 the LGA had a population of 101,346 people.

Ku-ring-gai's age structure varies most from that of the Sydney region in the size of the older persons age group (75+) which makes up 8.3% of the population. This is a 47% larger share of the population than Sydney's 5.6%.

The high school age group (age 12 to 17 years) has a 25% larger share of the population than for the same age group in the Sydney region. In Ku-ring-gai, high school student age residents make up 10% of the population (10,051).

Overall, Ku-ring-gai has larger representation in its population of the following groups in comparison to Sydney:

Age Group	Number in 2001	Change since 1996	% of Population	Sydney 2001	LGA's Relative Size
15-19	8288	Down 469	8.3%	6.9%	21% +
10-14	8212	Up 414	8.2%	6.7%	23+
45-49	7873	Down 590	7.8%	7.7%	2% +
85-89	1491	Up 241	1.5%	0.9%	61% +
80-84	2475	Up 301	2.5%	1.7%	46% +
75-79	3466	Up 438	3.5%	2.6%	35% +

## Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

In Ku-ring-gai, 87% of people live in families.

The LGA has 16,000 couples with children with 48% having all their children aged under 15 years. They constitute 58% of all families and have 63% of Ku-ring-gai's people.

Another 31% of families are couples without children, home to 17% of the population.

In Ku-ring-gai, 61% of adults (aged 15+) are married, 5% are separated or divorced, 7% are widowed, and 27% have never married.

By comparison with Sydney, Ku-ring-gai has a lot more married people (by 9.7%), fewer separated or divorced people (by 4.8%), slightly more people widowed (by 0.8%) and fewer people who have never married (by 5.8%).

Only 17% of younger people (15 to 34 years) were married in 2001 and this is much lower than Sydney's rate of 27%. However, in the 35 to 54 years age cohort, 85% were married and this is higher than the Sydney average (69%).

44% of Ku-ring-gai's 75+ age group was widowed and this is significantly higher than for Sydney (36%).



**Australia Day Concert 2003,  
Bicentennial Park, West Pymble**

The demographic make-up of the LGA presents challenges and opportunities for the Council. High levels of older persons including persons with disabilities and people living alone indicates the provision of services and programs including cultural services as a priority. High numbers of families with children under 15 also indicates opportunities for programs targeting their needs including those which encourage participation, engagement and involvement of young people.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that people involved in leisure or artistic pursuits and activities tend to be healthier in both physical and mental well being. Participation in cultural programs also builds civic pride and community spirit and in the case of young people it also develops talent and interests relevant for their future leisure and work opportunities.

The issue for Council is: to consider the needs of older residents and families with young people when developing strategic cultural programs, facilities and services for the LGA and to develop strategies in consultation with other Council and community planners and service providers.

# Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

## Natural Environment



Blue Gum High Forest

The culture of Ku-ring-gai is closely tied to the significant role its distinctive natural environment plays in shaping local identity and a sense of place. The area is renowned for its national and regional bushland parks, its topography of ridge lines, gullies, creek beds and extended views; its Blackbutt and Blue Gum forests, good soils and woodlands, understoreys and dependent fauna. The landform has influenced development along the main north/ south spine carrying transport routes and settlement which have spread along the ridges leaving the east west spine as natural bushland parks.

The issue for Council is: to work with the community on cultural development projects to protect and conserve Ku-ring-gai's rich natural heritage whilst at the same time enhancing the role of the environment in shaping local identity.

## Public and Private Gardens

Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area is characterised by its long- established and widely recognised gardens and nurseries. Older residential development along the main spine reflect larger block size where gardens combine exotic, deciduous and indigenous plantings including large tree canopies which form the skyline, line the streets and dominate gardens. More recent developments away from the spine and on smaller blocks of land have resulted in a predominance of gardens with indigenous and exotic plantings.

Ku-ring-gai's unique garden culture has inspired artists and writers whilst also providing opportunities to practice innovative landscape and garden design. Acknowledged leaders in Australian garden design such as Edna Walling, Paul Sorenson and Jocelyn Brown have all worked in the Ku-ring-gai area. Ku-ring-gai's garden heritage incorporates a variety of styles but most demonstrate a harmony with the natural landscape. Examples include the Swain Gardens at Bobbin Head, Eryldene and the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. However the LGA is rich in large estate, private gardens open only occasionally as well as public parks and reserves such as the Wahroonga Park and the gardens at railway stations.

Street planting varies from informal remnants of forests to more formal gardens planted over the past century. Some street plantings feature grassed and planted nature strips and verges which also contribute to Ku-ring-gai's distinctive character.

The issue for Council is: to ensure that the gardens in its care are valued and promoted as significant cultural assets and that the cultural and potential economic impacts of other gardens in the LGA are more widely acknowledged and appreciated.



Water-Smart Garden/Public Art, Turamurra (Artist: Malcolm Fry)

## Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

### Living Together

Recognising cultural diversity as a contemporary global movement is one of the challenges of the 21st century. It presents all communities with responsibilities to acknowledge the positive benefits of interculturalism, to meet any negative impacts with tolerance and respect and to identify imaginative ways of celebrating difference.



Midsummer Music in the Park, Wahroonga Park

Although in 2001, 67% of the Ku-ring-gai population were born in Australia and 84% spoke only English in their homes, 33% of Ku-ring-gai residents were born overseas and the number is rising. Residents of Ku-ring-gai come from over 30 other countries and in 2001, 9% identified that they were of Chinese ancestry. Ku-ring-gai's fastest growing community languages were Mandarin and Cantonese and these were also the most commonly spoken language other than English in 2001. Korean, Japanese, Italian and German were the next most commonly spoken languages in the LGA.

During consultations associated with the development of this Plan, a number of comments were made that indicated community acknowledgement of the increasing number of people from many cultures who have made their home in the area. The cultural diversity of Ku-ring-gai is recognised but a number of participants also suggested that access to cross-cultural awareness and appreciation would be useful in encouraging community cohesion and in celebrating and respecting difference.



Dual occupancy dwellings, Ku-ring-gai

The issue for Council is: to develop cultural programs and foster cultural development projects that acknowledge and promote the benefits of interculturalism, encourage access, develop tolerance and understanding and celebrate difference.

# Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

## Celebrating Indigenous Heritage



Child's Painting, Guringai Festival 2004

Kuringgai or Guringai was the common language of the group of Aboriginal people who lived from Port Jackson, north across Broken Bay and beyond Brisbane Water. It is derived from the name that Aboriginal people in south eastern Australia still use to describe themselves - kuri (kooi). 'Kuringgai' can be loosely translated as 'belonging to the Aborigines'. The fact that these people shared a common language identifies them as a tribe, although there were almost certainly several dialects of that language spoken.

Although recent Census data indicates low numbers of ATSI (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) people living in the LGA, (0.1% of the population compared to 1.0% across the Sydney region) nevertheless the area is rich in Indigenous heritage sites. On many of the Hawkesbury sandstone outcrops throughout the area, rock engravings can still be seen which reflect the traditional spiritual and totemic beliefs of the local Aborigines. The LGA has approximately 123 Indigenous heritage sites and the Council is active in recognising and celebrating Indigenous culture and heritage. Programs include:

- Flying the Aboriginal flag alongside the Australian flag on Council flagpoles
- Maintenance and promotion of walking tracks such as the Dari Track
- Adopting the "Statement of Reconciliation" in 2001?
- Incorporating appropriate "Welcome to Country" protocols at public events
- Development of the Indigenous collection at Gordon Library
- Participation in the regional Guringgai Festival on an annual basis with 8 other local councils
- Purchase of works of art by Aboriginal artists
- Development of interpretive programs at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.



Child's painting, Guringai Festival 2004

The issue for Council is: to continue to provide community leadership in fostering the celebration and appreciation of Australia's Indigenous heritage.

## Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

### Contemporary Architectural Heritage

The heritage of Ku-ring-gai comprises a rare mix of fine domestic architecture within a natural environment which contributes to the area's distinctiveness. Ku-ring-gai as a whole is of national significance because:

- It has an outstanding quantity, quality, depth and range of its twentieth century architecture.
- The evidence it provides of twentieth century town planning and conservation properties
- The railway whose presence demonstrates the bargaining power of public works and services in gaining votes for Federation.

Ku-ring-gai LGA contains houses and buildings designed by many of Australia's prominent twentieth century architects which have influenced the mainstream of Australian domestic architecture including John Sulman, Howard Josel and, Hardy Wilson, Leslie Wilkinson and Harry Seidler. These buildings in their natural settings are distinctive and are regularly chosen by film makers when researching potential film locations. Two of Ku-ring-gai's significant former homes - Eryldene and the Rose Seidler House - are acknowledged house museums, regularly open to the public. The municipality has the potential to develop a strong 'house museum' program.

An opportunity is also presented for Council to build on this unique circumstance through the encouragement and promotion of contemporary design excellence. This could begin with Council undertaking a survey of more recent buildings which demonstrate mid to late 20th century design excellence. The Council would need to develop new criteria for assessment in collaboration with other interested councils eg. Woollahra, Pittwater, Mosman. The promotion of the initiatives through seminars, brochures, exhibitions, civic awards etc. would position Ku-ring-gai at the forefront of contemporary heritage conservation. It would also result in the area benefiting from a unique stock of significant buildings that would impact on the cultural resource of the area.



Arts Resource Centre (The Presbyterian)

The issue for Council is: to extend its conservation policies to acknowledge and celebrate high quality contemporary architecture and design by developing and fostering a greater awareness and appreciation of the role of design excellence in fostering a sense of place.

# Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

## Cultural Assets and Resources

Ku-ring-gai Council supports a number of well-utilised cultural facilities across the LGA including libraries, an Arts Resource Centre, the Art Centre and Gallery, the Wildflower Garden, one theatre and a heritage house. In addition the Council maintains a number of facilities which contribute to cultural development in the area including community halls and meeting rooms, the showground and a significant number of parks and reserves.



**Ku-ring-gai Arts Centre, Bancroft Park, Roseville**



**Janine Bravery Retrospective Exhibition, Ku-ring-gai Arts Centre 2004**

Feedback from the community during recent consultations indicate that whilst they are very positive about Council's contributions to venues for the arts and culture, the majority of respondents indicated that the provision of a wider and improved range of venues and facilities is required as a high priority. The community wants to increase its participation and engagement levels in the arts and culture. They want to have more opportunities to explore the wealth of talent in the area but also to attract other artists to the area. A network of upgraded and new facilities is required including a regional gallery/ exhibition space, performing arts venue, heritage resource centre, a network of facilities that extend the role of the Ku-ring-gai Arts Centre and a youth arts centre.

The issue for Council is: to better understand the cultural facility needs of the community whilst also having access to an integrated and strategic planning framework in relation to the location and management of Council's cultural venues.



**Minyoung Lee's Hanji Exhibition, Ku-ring-gai Arts Centre**

## Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

### Cultural Industries

Cultural industries are the economic drivers of the future. As global economies shift from a manufacturing to a service focus, cultural industries closely linked to developments in IT and telecommunications are becoming increasingly important. The cultural industries include the arts and artists (visual arts, performing arts, writing, music etc) but they also include design, architecture, publishing and media arts such as film and video, music recording. They can also include specialist businesses such as antique shops, art supply stores, bookshops, caterers, cafes and restaurants. Places where the creative or cultural industries thrive are also those places where people want to be; to live, to work and to enjoy a sustainable lifestyle. Culture impacts on physical planning, social services, economic development and leisure.



Filming at the Art Centre, Bancroft Park, Roseville

In 2001, 1491 residents of Ku-ring-gai were employed in the cultural and recreational services or 3% of the population. This is an increase of 161 people since 1996. At the same time 1687 people were employed in the accommodation, cafes and restaurants sector representing an increase of 390 people. The Communications sector experienced growth between 1996 and 2001 and increased by 264 people to 916. Hospitality and communications along with cultural and recreational services all experienced growth to 2001 amongst Ku-ring-gai workers.

The issue for Council is: to better understand the scale of the cultural industry sector in Ku-ring-gai through an analysis of the sectors strengths and weaknesses and the identification of economic development opportunities.

# Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

## Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is an emerging aspect of the travel industry that encourages visitors to a place based on the presence of a specific experience or attraction such as a unique natural environment, an event or a celebrated building. Cultural tourism strengthens economic development and encourages local pride as well as fostering cultural development and the arts. To result in benefits for the local community as well as for visitors, cultural tourism must be well managed. As a guiding rule, if the attraction is valued by the locals and managed with their interests at the core, then it will likely work well for visitors.

Ku-ring-gai has a rich inventory of cultural attractions that present potential to be promoted as cultural tourist destinations. E.g. wildflower garden, historic houses, markets, open gardens, boutique shops, bushland trails, Aboriginal rock carvings etc. The Council has not developed a Tourism Strategy and the promotion of Ku-ring-gai - its history, heritage, identity, culture and environment is underdeveloped.



Walkers gathering for the Blackbutt Creek Trail

The issue for Council is: to recognise that Ku-ring-gai and its assets are one of Sydney's best kept secrets. A strategic approach to tourism management, focussing on cultural tourism, would complement Council's support for cultural development as well as enhance economic development.

## Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

### Networks of Association

The residents of Ku-ring-gai pride themselves on the significant number of community organisations active in the area. Participation in community life through volunteer work and through membership in service clubs and community organisations is high and engagement in local issues is widespread.

The 2001 Census data indicates that some 87% of detached houses in Ku-ring-gai were either fully owned or being purchased, compared with 56% of units and flats in the LGA,

Overall, 30% of dwellings are fully owned which is much greater than Sydney and suggests that Ku-ring-gai has more long term residents.



**Exhibition Space in Council's Customer Service Area**

11% of dwellings were rented privately which is also much less than for Sydney as a whole and this also indicates that Ku-ring-gai may also have less population turnover than Sydney. This characteristic of Ku-ring-gai contributes to community building and to the sense of community ownership that is an acknowledged characteristic of the Ku-ring-gai community.

Faith and religion are also aspects of Ku-ring-gai that impact on community identity and social cohesion. The area's main religious belief in 2001 was Christianity which was followed by 69% of the community.

The area has larger Anglican and Uniting Church communities than for Sydney as a whole (8.8% and 4.8%) and smaller Catholic communities (9.0%). Between 1996 and 2001 however, the Catholic religion experienced a rise of 1349 persons, and the Uniting Church fell by 1071 persons. The most common non-Christian religion in Ku-ring-gai was Judaism with 3850 followers or 3.8% of the community (0.8% for Sydney).

Other religions include Buddhism with 1,965 followers and Hinduism with 702 followers.

Churches provide a focus for communities of interests, places of worship and meeting as well as facilities for community activities. They are an integral part of community cultural life in the Ku-ring-gai LGA.

The issue for Council is: to build on the area's distinctive community spirit and sense of community obligation through collaborative planning of cultural development projects with the Ku-ring-gai community sector.

# Key Cultural Planning Issues and Needs

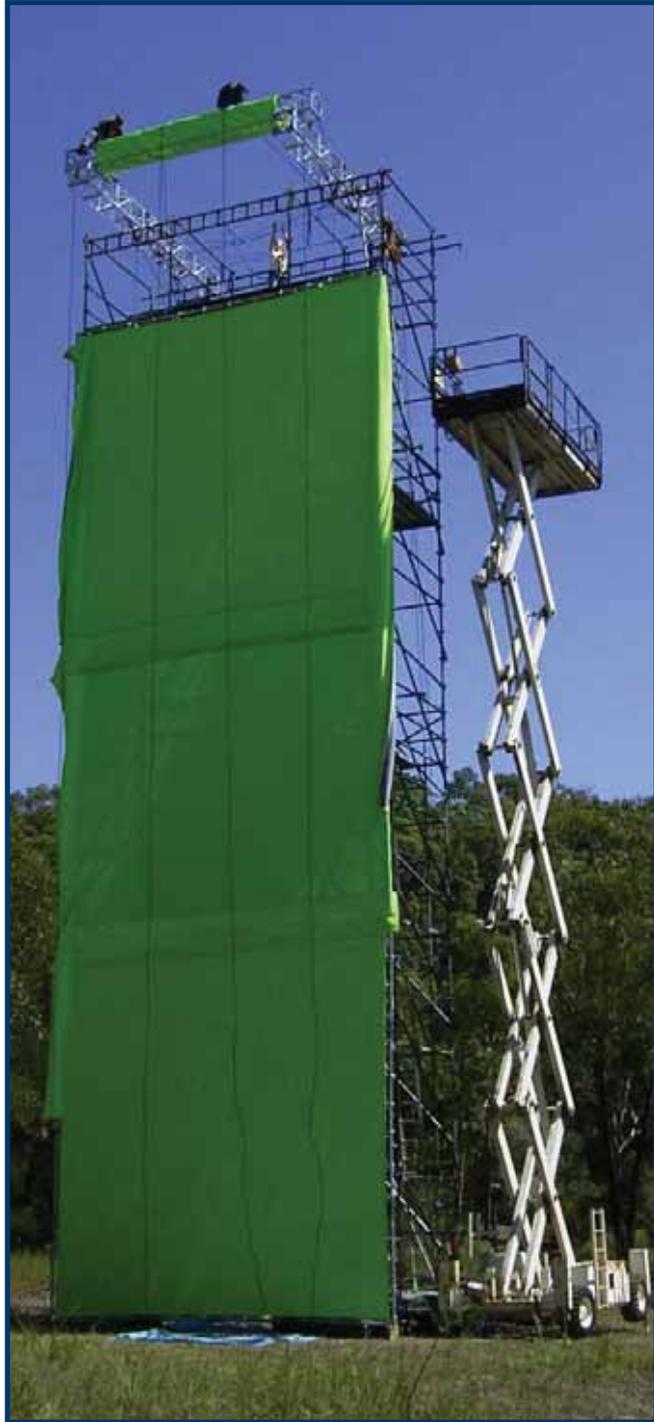
## Investing in Culture and Cultural Development

Ku-ring-gai Council has traditionally adopted a responsible approach to community cultural development. It has supported the development of widely recognised and well patronised cultural services and facilities such as the Arts Centre and the network of Library Services. The Council has facilitated support for heritage services and it sponsors festivals, events and ceremonies throughout the year.

In recent years it has adopted policies and plans that provide a sound base for decision making in the complex field of cultural activities and in particular has encouraged the establishment of an art in public places program. During this time Council has also engaged specialist staff to manage and coordinate its cultural programs.

With the development of this Cultural Plan, Council is moving further towards a leadership role in cultural development both within Council but also in the region and in the local community. It will need to marshal its resources to ensure that strategies and actions identified in the Plan are implemented and to do this it will need to invest energy and resources in securing infrastructure support from within Council, from other government sectors, from the business community and from private sponsors.

The issue for Council is: to identify sufficient resources in the cultural development area to ensure that cultural strategies are integrated into the overall business of Council in a more innovative, collaborative and effective manner.



“Green Screen” film shoot, Cliffhold Quarry

# Policy and Planning Framework

## Cultural Vision 2009

Ku-ring-gai is a place where creativity is celebrated, where equality of access to and participation in a diverse range of cultural activities is fostered and where the role of culture in enhancing quality of life is valued and supported.

## Council's Role in Cultural Development

Council's role in achieving the Vision is:

- To provide leadership in the advocacy of cultural development at the elected representative and senior management level
- To provide expertise in the development and management of cultural resources for the benefit of the entire community
- To foster a climate where cultural resources are harnessed and opportunities for advancing the cultural life of Ku-ring-gai are promoted.



Artist Nikki McCarthy at work,  
Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden (Public Art)



Sand Mandala 2004

# Cultural Planning Principles

In developing a cultural policy and planning framework for Ku-ring-gai the following principles or values have been identified which underpin and guide the Plan. These principles have been informed by Council's principal activities as outlined in the Management Plan 2004 - 2008.

## Leadership

Local government has a key role to play in championing the role of culture in building communities where everyone can express themselves and feel a sense of belonging. Ku-ring-gai Council is committed to ensuring that culture and cultural development are well resourced so as to encourage their integration into every aspect of community life.

## Inclusion and Tolerance

Ku-ring-gai is recognised as a fair city that encourages tolerance and challenges all forms of discrimination and where neighbourhoods and communities have a role in planning for the future. Ku-ring-gai's quality of cultural life will only be achieved by ensuring that its diverse communities are reflected and active in the cultural life of the area.

## Imagination and Creativity

Creativity is a positive opportunity that is central to cultural expression and experience in an area. In Ku-ring-gai new ideas are encouraged and artists are nurtured in recognition that they make a contribution to the city's capacity for innovation, to its economic performance as well as to the local cultural life.

## Sustainability

In the long term, Council's cultural development program will require resources to be maximised and relevant programs sustained. Resources include the tangible and intangible such as money as well as systems of support, attitudes, capacities and incentives. Short term decisions should not impact on long term potential to achieve sustainable outcomes.

## Integration and Connectivity

A strategy for culture must be underpinned by an active recognition of the connections and benefits that culture can bring to a wider agenda. The development of a more connected and culturally rich community will be enhanced by a commitment to collaboration and partnerships between government, the education sector, business and the community. In Ku-ring-gai new alliances will be fostered that provide the infrastructure for sustainable cultural development.

## Cultural Goals

The 1997 Cultural Policy provided Council with six Goals which addressed broad cultural directions for Council. These Goals have now been reviewed and brought up to date as a basis for this Plan 2004 to 2009. The development of the Goals has been based on extensive community consultation and research. The timeframe indicates short, medium and long-term time frames as follows:

- Short            September 2004 to March 2006
- Medium        April 2006 to March 2008
- Long-term     April 2008 and beyond.



Midsummer Music in the Park, 1999



Painting the West Pymble Hall Mural

# Cultural Goals

## Goal 1 Develop and Support Innovative Cultural Programs and Facilities

Council has a significant role in championing cultural issues to key partners both in the Ku-ring-gai community but also to stakeholders at other levels of government and in the corporate sector.

Council's leadership and advocacy will be critical in integrating cultural matters into the business of Council, in centrally integrating culture into Council's suite of strategic plans and in attracting and mobilising additional resources to improve the support of cultural development in the LGA.

### Our Strategy

To take a leading role in advocating for resources for cultural development and providing leadership in the planning and delivery of cultural services and programs.

Action	Time Frame	Performance Measure
1. Adopt the Cultural Plan 2004 - 2009	October 2004	Plan adopted
2. Establish a Cultural Plan Working Party to assist with implementation and resourcing. Members to be drawn from all Divisions of Council.	June 2005	Working Party appointed.
3. Schedule at least one high level visit to the Ministry for the Arts for the Mayor, GM and Director to ensure that the cultural needs and achievements of Ku-ring-gai are understood at the State level.	December 2005	Visit Implemented.
4. Take the lead in building a regional cultural network across the North Shore and Northern Beaches local government sector, building on collaborative planning associated with the Guringai Festival.	December 2005	Network established and meeting.
5. Review Council's community grants/ donations program in order that they reflect cultural priorities expressed in this Plan including the provision of support for community cultural activities including heritage projects.	March 2006	Report considered by Council.
6. Establish a Collection Management Working Party to develop systems to document, maintain and manage Council's cultural collections including art, sculpture, archives etc.	December 2006	Working Party established.
7. Undertake a review of Council's charging and pricing policies to ensure that access to Council facilities is affordable for not for profit, cultural organisations. See also Goal 2, Action 7.	December 2006	Report submitted.

# Cultural Goals

## Goal 2 Build and Encourage a Network of Cultural Facilities and Imaginative Cultural Programs

Ku-ring-gai Council has an acknowledged, longstanding commitment to fostering cultural vitality through its support for the public library network, community centres and leisure facilities including parklands and reserves for passive and active recreational use. Council provides access to opportunities for creative expression and skills development programs at the Ku-ring-gai Art Centre and through its public art policy and provides support to arts and cultural groups through grants and incentive schemes.

However Council's investment in cultural development would have a greater impact if a more accessible network of cultural facilities was established across the LGA. Cultural facilities and programs that are flexible, affordable and accessible would strengthen community cohesion, foster networking, improve cultural understanding and encourage interculturalism.

### Our Strategy

To undertake a strategic review of cultural accommodation including current and potential sites and facilities that can provide diverse cultural programs and activities and respond to documented community need.

ACTION	TIME FRAME	PERFORMANCE TARGET
1. Review Council's Public Art Policy and consider the establishment of a Public Art Trust.	June 2005	Policy reviewed.
2. Further develop opportunities for celebrating Aboriginal heritage and culture through creative cultural development projects and programs.	December 2005	Projects developed.
3. Obtain funds and commission a specialist Report to Council on the short, medium and long term options for the management and development of cultural facilities and programs across the LGA including flexible venues for the performing arts, art exhibitions as well as venues that accommodate the development of creative arts skills.	May 2006	Report considered.
4. Establish a Cultural Diversity Reference Group to work with Council to build a cultural development program that fosters interculturalism and tolerance.	June 2006	Reference Group established
5. Develop a Public Art Plan including a plan for the maintenance of public art.	June 2006	Public art plan developed.
6. Develop a marketing plan for the promotion of Council's cultural venues and their programs.	December 2006	Plan developed.
7. Review hiring and pricing policies for Council's cultural venues. See also Goal 1 Action 7.	December 2006	Review completed
8. Establish an Indigenous Consultative Committee/Working Party with Indigenous representatives - individuals, elders and groups to work with Council on building a greater awareness of Aboriginal culture.	December 2006	Working Party established
9. Develop cross cultural awareness training for Council staff and for interested community organisations.	June 2007	Training program established.
10. Develop strategies that encourage increased use of Council's Libraries and the Art Centre by CALD groups.	April 2008	Increased usage documented in attendance statistics.

# Cultural Goals

## Goal 3 Enhance Ku-ring-gai's Unique Natural and Built Heritage through Specialist Cultural Programs

In Ku-ring-gai, the local environment plays a significant role in fostering a sense of identity and connection to place. It is distinctive and highly valued by the local community. It attracts visitors and inspires artists.

The environment in Ku-ring-gai is made up of the natural bushland as well as the built environment and together they make up Ku-ring-gai's tangible and intangible heritage. It should be celebrated and conserved since it is Ku-ring-gai's environment that makes the area unique.

### Our strategy

To work with Council's Heritage Officer to promote the value of Ku-ring-gai's heritage by encouraging Council to develop and promote a City-wide heritage trail.

ACTION	TIME FRAME	PERFORMANCE TARGET
1. Establish active links between Council's Heritage Committee and the Cultural Development Unit and identify collaborative projects.	December 2005	Implement meeting schedule
2. Develop a significant cultural project that celebrates Ku-ring-gai's Centenary Year in 2006.	December 2006	Centenary project developed.
3. Take the lead in working with the Historic Houses Trust ( Rose Seidler House), Eryldene Trust and Museums and Galleries NSW in the coordinated development of a local House Museums curator which could also include Tulkiyan.	February 2007	Contact made and Curator appointed.
4. Take the lead in developing criteria for assessing contemporary design excellence in collaboration with other interested Councils.	April 2007	Develop criteria
5. Establish an artist in residence scheme at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.	December 2007	Implement artist residence program
6. Develop a feasibility study into the creation of an exhibition that documents Ku-ring-gai's lost or threatened heritage ( i.e. demolished or threatened buildings)	April 2008	Feasibility study carried out
7. Develop a Ku-ring-gai Garden Competition that celebrates gardens as cultural assets and includes a heritage garden category.	April 2008	Project Feasibility considered.
8. Establish an active oral history program at Ku-ring-gai Library based on a trained pool of volunteers and in collaboration with the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Inc.	April 2008	Continue support program
9. As part of the review of Council's grants/ donations (Goal 1 Action 6) work with the Heritage Officer to develop a small heritage grants program.	April 2009	Develop and implement grants program
10. Establish an annual Heritage Forum series including lectures and tours of significant heritage across the LGA.	June 2009	Implement in Heritage Week 2009

# Cultural Goals

## Goal 4 Establish Strategic and Cooperative Cultural Development Partnerships with the Arts/Cultural Community

Consultation and research indicates that there is a lot happening in Ku-ring-gai and that the area has an active cultural infrastructure. However it is largely underground and happens in isolation from Council and its cultural development initiatives.

Council needs to build on the initiatives taken by the Ku-ring-gai Cultural Arts Network in fostering active collaboration between cultural groups. It also needs to further develop partnership opportunities (such as that recently established at St Ives Shopping Centre) with local businesses and the area's many schools in order to strengthen project support and to make better use of under utilised facilities such as auditoriums and performing arts venues.

### Our Strategy

To maximise resources for cultural development by establishing closer cooperation between peak bodies, government, the education sector and within Council that realises an increase in resources available for arts and cultural activities across the LGA.

ACTION	TIME FRAME	PERFORMANCE TARGET
1. Promote and work collaboratively with the Ku-ring-gai Cultural Arts Network (KCAN) in resource sharing, communication and marketing projects.	Ongoing	Regular meetings held from 2004
2. Develop a Sponsorship Policy in association with Communications and Marketing Branch.	April 2005	Adopt and implement policy
3. Develop strong liaisons with the management of local heritage House Museums and the MGNSW to ensure that Ku-ring-gai's heritage assets are conserved and promoted.	June 2005	Establish relations
3. Develop strong liaisons with the management of local heritage House Museums and the MGNSW to ensure that Ku-ring-gai's heritage assets are conserved and promoted.	June 2005	Establish relations
4. Develop a Cultural Forum series with guest speakers to enhance the understanding of cultural groups and potential partners in the value of cultural development programs.	April 2006	1st Forum held
5. Work with the Australian Business Arts Foundation to develop sponsorship relationships that support arts and cultural events and projects.	June 2006	Meeting held and projects identified.
6. Work with local businesses and Chambers of Commerce to develop local Cultural Strategies for specific suburbs and precincts which enhance the vitality and identity of neighbourhoods and mainstreet shopping strips through public art and landscaping, events, buskers etc.	April 2007	Meeting schedule established. At least 1 meeting p.a held.
7. Assist local cultural groups with grant applications to funding bodies.	April 2008	Assist and register number of groups supported
8. Foster creative partnerships with local secondary schools and tertiary institutions which encourage the showcasing of local talent in the community.	June 2009	Partnerships established.

## Cultural Goals

### Goal 5 Engage Arts/Cultural Community Groups in the Planning and Delivery of Cultural Projects and Events

Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area (LGA) enjoys high levels of education in comparison to the state average and the median weekly income is higher than the Sydney Statistical Division. Generally, the Ku-ring-gai community is articulate and passionate when it comes to defending local interests and has access to the resources that accommodate involvement in preserving the area's unique and distinctive lifestyle.

However, although Council has developed policies which encourage and support equity of access in services, community engagement in decision making and inclusive consultation protocols. Council has a civic responsibility to ensure that as many local people as possible become involved in influencing Council decision making. This includes the development of plans and strategies as well as participation in programs and services including cultural development activities.

#### Our Strategy

To work with all sections of Council to ensure that Council's Access and Equity Policy and the Community Consultation Plan are understood and utilised using creative and imaginative methodologies which encourage improved levels of participation.

ACTION	TIME FRAME	PERFORMANCE TARGET
1. Review the implementation methods of the Access and Equity Policy and the Community Consultation Plan to ensure effective outcomes and improved participation in cultural programs.	June 2005	Implement changes based on Review
2. Review councils web based calendar of events (as well as in print form) to ensure widespread promotion of cultural activities across the LGA.	June 2005	Implement and promote web calendar.
3. Develop a Cultural Development Community Consultation Plan to establish methods for ongoing and regular feedback on cultural issues.	December 2005	Plan developed and regular feedback received.
4. Develop and maintain a database of Cultural assets and resources with key contact data to ensure that Council can actively communicate with cultural stakeholders as needed.	June 2006	Creation of data base
5. Ensure that Council's pricing policies for cultural programs and services takes account of the disadvantaged in the community.	December 2006	Changes implemented. Usage increased.
6. Establish an Arts Access Task Force that identifies and develops cultural programs targeting the needs of older adults, young people and people with disabilities.	June 2007	Task Force established.

## Cultural Goals

### Goal 6 Promote and Foster the Ongoing Development of Arts/Cultural Pursuits in Ku-ring-gai

Ku-ring-gai hasn't been widely recognised for its thriving cultural industries. When local businesses are looked at in isolation it may not appear that there is much in the way of cultural industry activity in the LGA, but when looked at as a group, Ku-ring-gai's cultural industries have the potential to significantly underpin the local economy. The area has a significant number of small, home businesses particularly in the IT and design/ architecture fields. It has a significant education infrastructure including one university and primary and secondary schools. Private music teachers abound as do ballet and dance schools. Ku-ring-gai has a number of commercial art galleries as well as antique shops, bookshops and art/craft supplies outlets. The area is known for its cafes and restaurants and has a growing number of Bed and Breakfast businesses (B&B). In Ku-ring-gai, culture including access to education facilities plays a significant role in attracting and keeping people in the area.

#### Our Strategy

In recognising that the arts and culture are more than an aesthetic experience, Council will commission a Cultural Industry Audit in order to better understand the scope of the local industry, to identify gaps and opportunities for future development.

ACTION	TIME FRAME	PERFORMANCE TARGETS
1. Develop a Business Plan for a cultural festival project in Ku-ring-gai.	June 2005	Plan considered and Festival held.
2. Maintain the register of local public artists and their work.	June 2005	Register up to date and maintained.
3. Develop a promotional brochure as part of an overall marketing strategy for Ku-ring-gai as a film location.	December 2005	Brochure distributed.
4. Based on information in the Audit, establish a Ku-ring-gai Artists Network in collaboration with KCAN.	December 2006	Establish network, regular meetings held.
5. Establish a Ku-ring-gai Cultural Industries Task Force to promote the cultural industries.	April 2007	Task force created
6. Commission a Cultural Tourism strategy for Ku-ring-gai as a contribution to the development of the local cultural industries.	July 2007	Strategy developed and implemented.
7. Develop an artist's studio program in selected Council facilities.	April 2008	Program established.