National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries

Overall Report for Bathurst Regional Council

Introduction ................................................................. 2
Joint Strategy ................................................................. 2
Organisational Structure ................................................. 3
Staffing ........................................................................... 3
Training & professional development ............................... 3
Volunteers ...................................................................... 4
Collection management .................................................. 4
Shops/Retail outlets ......................................................... 5
Visitor Evaluation .......................................................... 5
Promotion ........................................................................ 7
Website ........................................................................... 7
Annual event .................................................................... 8
Education & public programs ........................................... 8
Cross Council Collaboration ........................................... 9

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Report for the Australian Fossil & Mineral Museum
Appendix 2: Report for Bathurst District Historical Society Museum
Appendix 3: Report for Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
Appendix 4: Report for Bathurst School of Art Collection, Bathurst Regional Library
Appendix 5: Report for Chifley Home
Appendix 6: Report for the National Motor Racing Museum
National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries

Overall Report for Bathurst Regional Council

In 2007, Museums & Galleries NSW (M&G NSW) undertook a project to assess the museums and gallery of Bathurst using the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries Assessment tool. This project was undertaken for the Community and Cultural Services department, Bathurst Regional Council in consultation with Lesley Atkinson, Director of Community and Cultural Services. The following facilities and collections were assessed through the program:

- The Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum
- Bathurst District Historical Society Museum (a volunteer managed organisation supported by Bathurst Regional Council)
- Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
- Bathurst School of Art Collection, Bathurst Regional Council Library
- Chifley Home
- The National Motor Racing Museum

Reports were prepared for each facility, providing feedback on key strengths and opportunities for further development. Through this process, it became clear that there were a number of opportunities for collaboration across the cultural facilities and areas of operation that are best addressed through a shared approach. This shared future recognises the unique character of each cultural facility in Bathurst and should be undertaken to enhance rather than subsume operations.

JOINT STRATEGY

The Program identified strategic planning as an important process for each facility to undertake. Planning not only assists in ensuring a clearly articulated direction for an organisation but enables organisations to communicate this to council management and the community at large. It is suggested that a joint strategy for the cultural services of Bathurst is developed, drawing on both Council’s overall planning documents (such as the strategic, cultural, social and heritage plans) and the individual plans of each venue. Bathurst Regional Council Library’s Vision 2012 could be taken as a starting point and should certainly be considered in the planning process.
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

While most staff working with the museums and gallery of Bathurst Regional Council are located within the Community and Cultural Services department, some operations are located within other council departments. In particular the National Motor Racing Museum sits under council’s Business and Economic Development department. It is suggested that council consider shifting the museum’s management from Economic Development to Cultural and Community Services to enhance opportunities for shared resources including staffing, training, programming for schools, audience evaluation, marketing, collection management and storage. The collaboration that already occurs across the museums and gallery of Bathurst is impressive and has been commended by representatives of other local governments, the inclusion of the NMRM in Cultural and Community Services would further strengthen this model.

At present guides for Chifley Home and support staff for major events at the National Motor Racing Museum are managed through the Bathurst Visitor Information Centre. Whilst it is a great advantage to be able to source extra staff for major events through the Visitor Information Centre, it is suggested that the management of regular staff (such as guides) and volunteers is managed through the Community and Cultural Services Department with the Visitor Information Centre supplementing this workforce for major events.

STAFFING

There are a number of opportunities for positions to be shared between Bathurst’s cultural facilities. At present the collection manager works across all council operated facilities, it may be possible to extend this to other personnel. For example, the NMRM’s extensive expertise in shop management could be extended to the other cultural facilities and public programs and education staff from the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum and Bathurst Regional Gallery may be able to provide support to Chifley Home and NMRM.

Such developments would need to take into account the current demands on staff, so that appropriate support is provided to key staff, possibly through the introduction of assistant positions within public programs and collection management and the expansion of volunteer roles within council’s facilities.

Across the museums of Bathurst there appears to be a need for guides/site interpreters. It is suggested that council considers establishing a core group of volunteer guides who could provide support across Bathurst’s cultural facilities. Alternatively, guides could focus on a specific property but be given shared training and development opportunities. It may be possible to approach the communication or performing arts faculties of CSU for assistance in this area.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development opportunities are an important aspect of human resource management in cultural facilities. Unlike broader council operations there are limited opportunities to develop linear career paths, so that the ongoing development of staff in existing positions becomes a key aspect of staff retention.
A number of cultural facilities in Bathurst have developed training programs for volunteers and staff, in particular the regional gallery and the library have developed ongoing programs. It may be possible for cultural services to develop a common program that would encourage collaboration across the facilities. Topics that could be covered include:

- Disability awareness
- Guiding
- Front of house operations
- Cultural awareness
- Object handling
- Collection care
- Disaster Response
- Surveying visitors
- Visitor Evaluation
- OH&S in museums and galleries

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a key role in most cultural institutions in Australia from large federal organisations such as National Gallery of Australia through to the myriad of volunteer managed and operated museums that are the cultural backbone of towns across the country. Within Bathurst, volunteers play an important role in most of the cultural facilities. There is an opportunity to increase the number of volunteers working with some of the facilities, in particular Chifley Home and the National Motor Racing Museum. However, in considering an increase in volunteers, it is important to remember that there is still a substantial amount of work involved in volunteer management and that volunteers should be identified to supplement and compliment rather than replace paid positions.

It is suggested that a volunteer manager’s position is created that could coordinate volunteer operations across Bathurst’s cultural facilities as well as actively liaising with the Bathurst and District Historical Society to support their activities. Such a role could be involved in undertaking a skills audit across the cultural facilities to identify existing skills within the staff and volunteers and where there are gaps. The volunteer manager could also be involved in developing position descriptions for key volunteer roles (which assists in identifying people for specific roles and clarifying an individual’s role within the organisation), actively seeking new volunteers, managing volunteer rosters, coordinating training for volunteers and developing volunteer policies and procedures.

As discussed above, there is an opportunity to develop a volunteer program that runs across the volunteer facilities of Bathurst that could involve guides, research assistants, public program assistants (including support for opening night events), audience evaluation assistants, exhibition installation assistants and front desk personnel.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Through the work of council’s collection manager, there is a cohesive approach to collection management across all the cultural facilities of Bathurst. This is to be commended and is a great example of the cooperative approach undertaken by the cultural services of Bathurst. This approach has led to the development of a shared approach to Disaster Preparedness including risk assessment, training and planning.
It is suggested that this is extended to incorporate an annual risk assessment, disaster preparedness training and the development of a venue wide Integrated pest management system (IPM). As IPM is as much about the culture of organisations as it is about the management of pests, the approach taken with Disaster Preparedness could easily be extended into IPM.

A number of the cultural facilities in Bathurst are in need of dedicated collection storage areas. Discussions have commenced to look at the development of a shared storage facility. Such a store would be of great benefit to all the cultural organisations of Bathurst including the library and council’s archives. Focusing on a single storage facility would consolidate council resources into the one location and ensure the development of a single high quality facility rather than dispersing resources across a number of smaller locations.

In anticipation of the development of a shared store, it is suggested that Bathurst Regional Council investigates the consolidation of the current collection databases into a single collection management system. This would enable a more streamlined approach to the management of the collection as it is moved into the new storage facility. Furthermore, using a single database would enable cross collection research which could be of great benefit not only to the staff and volunteers who work with the collections but also to the wider community who wish to access the collections. The museum, gallery and library operated by Newcastle City Council have recently collaborated to acquire a shared collection management system.

**SHOPS/RETAIL OUTLETS**

A number of the cultural facilities operate shops- in particular the National Motor Racing Museum, the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery and the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum. At present there is no coordination between the shops so that staff from each facility are separately managing small retail outlets with differing operations, point of sales systems and resources. This leads to an unnecessary drain on staff resources from core operations. A specialist retail staff member could be sourced within Council or the community to take responsibility of shop functions in all institutions, improving services (such as the use of EFTPOS and electronic point of sale systems), design and financial control. This created position would then allow the specialist public programming / curatorial / exhibition staff to focus on servicing their museums and the community, and assist BRC to realise greater financial sustainability for their museums.

The online shop facility operated by the National Motor Racing Museum (http://store2091.storeserver-2.com/) is particularly innovative and is perhaps something that could be expanded to incorporate items of relevance for the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, and the other cultural institutions in Bathurst.

**VISITOR EVALUATION**

Whilst the cultural institutions are undertaking some visitor evaluation, this has been limited due to a lack of staff and resources to undertake this work. An opportunity exists for BRC (in consultation with Bathurst’s cultural facilities and possibly Charles Sturt University) to develop an overarching evaluation template for the exhibitions, activities and events operating within the Bathurst’s museums, library and the gallery, and to coordinate blanket visitor evaluation programs across all cultural institutions. An overall
strategy for all of BRC’s cultural institutions should involve future evaluations being specifically targeted, including focus groups, visitor evaluations of exhibitions (both permanent and temporary) and the inclusion of evaluation processes in talks, seminars and other public programs.

Future planning can be guided by an analysis of visitor evaluations which can be further informed by demographic information such as the Bathurst Regional statistical profile and regional profile and the data on tourists to Bathurst from the Tourism Information Centre. This analysis should then be incorporated into future program planning, with audience evaluation used to identify gaps and areas for development. Positive and negative feedback, visitor trends and visitor gaps can then be incorporated into future programming.

**M&G NSW Regional Audience Development Study**

In today's crowded marketplace art galleries and museums must meet the needs of increasingly demanding and complex audiences through dynamic marketing and audience development strategies. To be effective museums and galleries must:

- acquire, develop, engage and retain audiences,
- understand audience attitudes, actions and attributes,
- assess and improve the effectiveness of public and education programs, and
- use marketing campaigns and budgets as effectively as possible.

In May 2007 M&G NSW commenced the Strategic Audience Development Study for galleries & museums in regional NSW, funded through a pilot grant from the Australia Council. The study aims to provide a set of benchmark information on local and regional audiences at publicly funded galleries in NSW. These results will provide galleries, museums, arts funding bodies and local government with information and insights to improve audience numbers, access, engagement and diversity.

In Year 1 of the program, over 2200 visitor surveys were completed at 12 art galleries in two regions of NSW, the Hunter and Western Sydney. The results, due for public release in mid July, contain new insights on:

- Visitor Profile: the demographic breakdown of gallery audiences, including income level, employment status, language background and age,
- Visitor Behaviour: including the length of time spent in the gallery, time since last visit, participation in gallery-run workshops and programs, and
- Visitor Satisfaction: visitor satisfaction levels, areas of key interest, and areas for improvements.

M&G NSW is now in a position to be able to offer visitor research services on a consultancy basis with extremely competitive rates. M&G NSW can offer an established, field tested methodology designed specifically for small to medium sized cultural institutions in regional areas. We can also provide access to our growing database of regional benchmark data, so that clients can compare their results to those from similar institutions on a regional and/or statewide basis. As part of the package M&G NSW will deliver training in audience research methods to staff and volunteers at participating museums and galleries, ensuring that there will be long term benefits to those organisations.
For further information please contact:
Katy Alexander
Manager, Audience Development & Research
Ph: +61 2 9339 9919
Email: katya@mgnsw.org.au

PROMOTION
Promotion and marketing is another area where there is an opportunity for Bathurst’s cultural facilities to work cooperatively. It is suggested that the cultural services of Bathurst Council consider producing an annual report that can be used to highlight the impressive work undertaken by Bathurst’s cultural services both to the council at large and the broader community. This could include highlights from each facility as well as overall achievements.

Some joint promotion is already undertaken through the council’s website where the cultural facilities are all represented and at the Tourist Information Centre. There has been discussion about developing a more collaborative approach at the Tourist Information Centre, possibly through the development of a small, shared exhibition area. If managed effectively this could both enhance the visitor experience at the Centre and provide comprehensive information about Bathurst’s impressive array of cultural facilities.

It is suggested that Bathurst Regional Council considers the development of a joint marketing plan for the cultural services of Bathurst that could address issues such as cross promotion, online presence, the use of email lists and other contemporary communication strategies.

WEBSITE
At present the cultural institutions have a presence on a range of websites including Bathurst Regional Council and Bathurst Tourist Information Centre as well as the individual websites of the National Motor Racing Museum, the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, the Dead Bones Society (program of the AFFM), Bathurst Regional Gallery and Hill End Artists in residence program (program of BRAG).

Each website addresses a particular audience or aspect of the operations of the cultural institutions of Bathurst and together provide an impressive array of information about the cultural organisations and their collections. It is suggested that Bathurst Regional Council considers the development of an overarching web presence plan for the cultural facilities of Bathurst (including the Bathurst Historical Society). This could address issues such as:

- Shared web management resources (including staff and software)
- Online audiences (who are they and what are they seeking)
- Opportunities for collaboration (such as the suggested collaboration between Chifley Home, Old Parliament House and the other Prime Ministers residences)
- Opportunities for audience interaction and collaboration (such as blogs, wikis, online discussions/forums)
- The use of social networking facilities such as Facebook and My Space
- Opportunities for online educational resources and interactivity (there may be opportunities to link in with the small schools program and the School of Distance Education in Dubbo)
ANNUAL EVENT

The cultural facilities of Bathurst currently participate in various events on the Bathurst calendar, such as the Autumn Colours festival, racing days and Australia Day. There is potential to develop an annual event focusing on the cultural facilities of Bathurst. One option would be to create a 1940s event, growing out of the 1940s day currently held at Chifley Home. This event could focus on either Bathurst during WWII or the post war period in Bathurst and could incorporate the story of the Chifleys (with collection material in both Chifley Home and Bathurst and District Historical Society), the arrival of artists Donald Friend and Russell Drysdale in Hill End (and related collections held by the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery), the development of Mount Panorama as a motor racing site (and possibly material from the Penzig Speedway collection), the last days of the School of Arts library, the adaption of significant buildings during the war (such as the use of the building that now houses the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum building as an army canteen and the use of Abercrombie House by the Women’s Land Army. Other elements that could be pulled in include a 1940s film festival at the local cinema, a 1940s dance night with the conservatorium of music, performances of the play *A local Man: A play about Ben Chifley* and an Indiana Jones night at the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Whilst some sites, such as the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery and the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, have developed strong and unique education programs others such as the National motor Racing Museum, have not had access to staff with experience in this area of museum practice. There is great potential to expand programs such as the children’s writing workshop *Deadbones Society* to other locations such as the National Motor Racing Museum and the Bathurst District Historical Society Museum. Similarly, material from the various museum collections could be developed into “museum in a box” materials in the same manner as the gallery has created. Two examples of this concept are outlined below.

**Australian War Memorial Boxes**


*If you can’t make it to the Memorial or want to add value to your visit, borrow a Memorial Box. They contain artefacts that students can handle, as well as photographs, case studies, uniforms, a video, oral histories, teacher’s notes, and more. Memorial Boxes can be adapted for use across many areas of study and are accessible to a wide range of students, from lower primary to senior secondary.*

There are six titles in the series:

Box 01 – *Australia in the First World War*
Box 02 – *For service to others*
Box 03 – *Too dark for the Light Horse: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the defence forces*
Box 04 – *Australia under attack!*
Box 05 – *We want to do more: the experience of women and children during the Second World War*
Box 06 – *Our war in the Pacific, 1942*
Australian Museum - Museum in a Box

Museum in a Box® is an exciting outreach program for schools and students in New South Wales. There are over twenty different boxes containing a treasure trove of real museum specimens, casts, artefacts, dioramas, photographs, video and audio tapes, games, books and computer software. The fun activities for children are explained in the Teachers’ notes and information about the topic is given on large panels. Each box has a theme and the activities are linked to the school syllabus.

Individual boxes are currently available each school term for set loan periods of three weeks. Museum in a Box® can be sent to and collected from any school within New South Wales.

As outlined above, there is great potential for collaboration between the staff at the cultural facilities in Bathurst. There is already a level of collaboration between the gallery and the library for the development of school holiday programs. By looking more holistically at the resource needs for education and public programs, it may be possible to expand support for this vital area of museum and gallery practice to ensure all cultural facilities in Bathurst have access to educational expertise. It may also be possible to tap into specific areas of expertise from other areas of council operation such as youth and aged care services.

CROSS COUNCIL COLLABORATION

Some collaboration is already occurring between the cultural facilities of Bathurst and other areas of council operation, in particular the Tourist Information Centre. There is potential to expand upon such relationships to the benefit of both. Areas such as audience development, marketing & promotion, youth services, aged care services and website development could all benefit from collaborative programming with the cultural facilities of Bathurst.
National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries
Overall Report for Bathurst Regional Council

Introduction ............................................................................................................ 2
Joint Strategy ........................................................................................................... 2
Organisational Structure ......................................................................................... 3
Staffing ..................................................................................................................... 3
Training & professional development .................................................................... 3
Volunteers ............................................................................................................... 4
Collection management ......................................................................................... 4
Shops/Retail outlets ............................................................................................... 5
Visitor Evaluation ................................................................................................... 5
Promotion ............................................................................................................... 7
Website ................................................................................................................... 7
Annual event ......................................................................................................... 8
Education & public programs ............................................................................... 8
Cross Council Collaboration ................................................................................. 9

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Report for the Australian Fossil & Mineral Museum
Appendix 2: Report for Bathurst District Historical Society Museum
Appendix 3: Report for Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
Appendix 4: Report for Bathurst School of Art Collection, Bathurst Regional Library
Appendix 5: Report for Chifley Home
Appendix 6: Report for the National Motor Racing Museum
National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries

Overall Report for Bathurst Regional Council

In 2007, Museums & Galleries NSW (M&G NSW) undertook a project to assess the museums and gallery of Bathurst using the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries Assessment tool. This project was undertaken for the Community and Cultural Services department, Bathurst Regional Council in consultation with Lesley Atkinson, Director of Community and Cultural Services. The following facilities and collections were assessed through the program:

- The Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum
- Bathurst District Historical Society Museum (a volunteer managed organisation supported by Bathurst Regional Council)
- Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
- Bathurst School of Art Collection, Bathurst Regional Council Library
- Chifley Home
- The National Motor Racing Museum

Reports were prepared for each facility, providing feedback on key strengths and opportunities for further development. Through this process, it became clear that there were a number of opportunities for collaboration across the cultural facilities and areas of operation that are best addressed through a shared approach. This shared future recognises the unique character of each cultural facility in Bathurst and should be undertaken to enhance rather than subsume operations.

JOINT STRATEGY

The Program identified strategic planning as an important process for each facility to undertake. Planning not only assists in ensuring a clearly articulated direction for an organisation but enables organisations to communicate this to council management and the community at large. It is suggested that a joint strategy for the cultural services of Bathurst is developed, drawing on both Council’s overall planning documents (such as the strategic, cultural, social and heritage plans) and the individual plans of each venue. Bathurst Regional Council Library’s Vision 2012 could be taken as a starting point and should certainly be considered in the planning process.
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

While most staff working with the museums and gallery of Bathurst Regional Council are located within the Community and Cultural Services department, some operations are located within other council departments. In particular the National Motor Racing Museum sits under council’s Business and Economic Development department. It is suggested that council consider shifting the museum’s management from Economic Development to Cultural and Community Services to enhance opportunities for shared resources including staffing, training, programming for schools, audience evaluation, marketing, collection management and storage. The collaboration that already occurs across the museums and gallery of Bathurst is impressive and has been commended by representatives of other local governments, the inclusion of the NMRM in Cultural and Community Services would further strengthen this model.

At present guides for Chifley Home and support staff for major events at the National Motor Racing Museum are managed through the Bathurst Visitor Information Centre. Whilst it is a great advantage to be able to source extra staff for major events through the Visitor Information Centre, it is suggested that the management of regular staff (such as guides) and volunteers is managed through the Community and Cultural Services Department with the Visitor Information Centre supplementing this workforce for major events.

STAFFING

There are a number of opportunities for positions to be shared between Bathurst’s cultural facilities. At present the collection manager works across all council operated facilities, it may be possible to extend this to other personnel. For example, the NMRM’s extensive expertise in shop management could be extended to the other cultural facilities and public programs and education staff from the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum and Bathurst Regional Gallery may be able to provide support to Chifley Home and NMRM.

Such developments would need to take into account the current demands on staff, so that appropriate support is provided to key staff, possibly through the introduction of assistant positions within public programs and collection management and the expansion of volunteer roles within council’s facilities.

Across the museums of Bathurst there appears to be a need for guides/site interpreters. It is suggested that council considers establishing a core group of volunteer guides who could provide support across Bathurst’s cultural facilities. Alternatively, guides could focus on a specific property but be given shared training and development opportunities. It may be possible to approach the communication or performing arts faculties of CSU for assistance in this area.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development opportunities are an important aspect of human resource management in cultural facilities. Unlike broader council operations there are limited opportunities to develop linear career paths, so that the ongoing development of staff in existing positions becomes a key aspect of staff retention.
A number of cultural facilities in Bathurst have developed training programs for volunteers and staff, in particular the regional gallery and the library have developed ongoing programs. It may be possible for cultural services to develop a common program that would encourage collaboration across the facilities. Topics that could be covered include:

- Disability awareness
- Guiding
- Front of house operations
- Cultural awareness
- Object handling
- Collection care
- Disaster Response
- Surveying visitors
- Visitor Evaluation
- OH&S in museums and galleries

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a key role in most cultural institutions in Australia from large federal organisations such as National Gallery of Australia through to the myriad of volunteer managed and operated museums that are the cultural backbone of towns across the country. Within Bathurst, volunteers play an important role in most of the cultural facilities. There is an opportunity to increase the number of volunteers working with some of the facilities, in particular Chifley Home and the National Motor Racing Museum. However, in considering an increase in volunteers, it is important to remember that there is still a substantial amount of work involved in volunteer management and that volunteers should be identified to supplement and compliment rather than replace paid positions.

It is suggested that a volunteer manager’s position is created that could coordinate volunteer operations across Bathurst’s cultural facilities as well as actively liaising with the Bathurst and District Historical Society to support their activities. Such a role could be involved in undertaking a skills audit across the cultural facilities to identify existing skills within the staff and volunteers and where there are gaps. The volunteer manager could also be involved in developing position descriptions for key volunteer roles (which assists in identifying people for specific roles and clarifying an individual’s role within the organisation), actively seeking new volunteers, managing volunteer rosters, coordinating training for volunteers and developing volunteer policies and procedures.

As discussed above, there is an opportunity to develop a volunteer program that runs across the volunteer facilities of Bathurst that could involve guides, research assistants, public program assistants (including support for opening night events), audience evaluation assistants, exhibition installation assistants and front desk personnel.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Through the work of council’s collection manager, there is a cohesive approach to collection management across all the cultural facilities of Bathurst. This is to be commended and is a great example of the cooperative approach undertaken by the cultural services of Bathurst. This approach has led to the development of a shared approach to Disaster Preparedness including risk assessment, training and planning.
It is suggested that this is extended to incorporate an annual risk assessment, disaster preparedness training and the development of a venue wide Integrated pest management system (IPM). As IPM is as much about the culture of organisations as it is about the management of pests, the approach taken with Disaster Preparedness could easily be extended into IPM.

A number of the cultural facilities in Bathurst are in need of dedicated collection storage areas. Discussions have commenced to look at the development of a shared storage facility. Such a store would be of great benefit to all the cultural organisations of Bathurst including the library and council’s archives. Focusing on a single storage facility would consolidate council resources into the one location and ensure the development of a single high quality facility rather than dispersing resources across a number of smaller locations.

In anticipation of the development of a shared store, it is suggested that Bathurst Regional Council investigates the consolidation of the current collection databases into a single collection management system. This would enable a more streamlined approach to the management of the collection as it is moved into the new storage facility. Furthermore, using a single database would enable cross collection research which could be of great benefit not only to the staff and volunteers who work with the collections but also to the wider community who wish to access the collections. The museum, gallery and library operated by Newcastle City Council have recently collaborated to acquire a shared collection management system.

**SHOPS/RETAIL OUTLETS**

A number of the cultural facilities operate shops- in particular the National Motor Racing Museum, the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery and the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum. At present there is no coordination between the shops so that staff from each facility are separately managing small retail outlets with differing operations, point of sales systems and resources. This leads to an unnecessary drain on staff resources from core operations. A specialist retail staff member could be sourced within Council or the community to take responsibility of shop functions in all institutions, improving services (such as the use of EFTPOS and electronic point of sale systems), design and financial control. This created position would then allow the specialist public programming / curatorial / exhibition staff to focus on servicing their museums and the community, and assist BRC to realise greater financial sustainability for their museums.

The online shop facility operated by the National Motor Racing Museum ([http://store2091.storeserver-2.com/](http://store2091.storeserver-2.com/)) is particularly innovative and is perhaps something that could be expanded to incorporate items of relevance for the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, and the other cultural institutions in Bathurst.

**VISITOR EVALUATION**

Whilst the cultural institutions are undertaking some visitor evaluation, this has been limited due to a lack of staff and resources to undertake this work. An opportunity exists for BRC (in consultation with Bathurst’s cultural facilities and possibly Charles Sturt University) to develop an overarching evaluation template for the exhibitions, activities and events operating within the Bathurst’s museums, library and the gallery, and to coordinate blanket visitor evaluation programs across all cultural institutions. An overall
strategy for all of BRC’s cultural institutions should involve future evaluations being specifically targeted, including focus groups, visitor evaluations of exhibitions (both permanent and temporary) and the inclusion of evaluation processes in talks, seminars and other public programs.

Future planning can be guided by an analysis of visitor evaluations which can be further informed by demographic information such as the Bathurst Regional statistical profile and regional profile and the data on tourists to Bathurst from the Tourism Information Centre. This analysis should then be incorporated into future program planning, with audience evaluation used to identify gaps and areas for development. Positive and negative feedback, visitor trends and visitor gaps can then be incorporated into future programming.

M&G NSW Regional Audience Development Study
In today’s crowded marketplace art galleries and museums must meet the needs of increasingly demanding and complex audiences through dynamic marketing and audience development strategies. To be effective museums and galleries must:

- acquire, develop, engage and retain audiences,
- understand audience attitudes, actions and attributes,
- assess and improve the effectiveness of public and education programs, and
- use marketing campaigns and budgets as effectively as possible.

In May 2007 M&G NSW commenced the Strategic Audience Development Study for galleries & museums in regional NSW, funded through a pilot grant from the Australia Council. The study aims to provide a set of benchmark information on local and regional audiences at publicly funded galleries in NSW. These results will provide galleries, museums, arts funding bodies and local government with information and insights to improve audience numbers, access, engagement and diversity.

In Year 1 of the program, over 2200 visitor surveys were completed at 12 art galleries in two regions of NSW, the Hunter and Western Sydney. The results, due for public release in mid July, contain new insights on:

- Visitor Profile: the demographic breakdown of gallery audiences, including income level, employment status, language background and age,
- Visitor Behaviour: including the length of time spent in the gallery, time since last visit, participation in gallery-run workshops and programs, and
- Visitor Satisfaction: visitor satisfaction levels, areas of key interest, and areas for improvements.

M&G NSW is now in a position to be able to offer visitor research services on a consultancy basis with extremely competitive rates. M&G NSW can offer an established, field tested methodology designed specifically for small to medium sized cultural institutions in regional areas. We can also provide access to our growing database of regional benchmark data, so that clients can compare their results to those from similar institutions on a regional and/or statewide basis. As part of the package M&G NSW will deliver training in audience research methods to staff and volunteers at participating museums and galleries, ensuring that there will be long term benefits to those organisations.
PROMOTION

Promotion and marketing is another area where there is an opportunity for Bathurst’s cultural facilities to work cooperatively. It is suggested that the cultural services of Bathurst Council consider producing an annual report that can be used to highlight the impressive work undertaken by Bathurst’s cultural services both to the council at large and the broader community. This could include highlights from each facility as well as overall achievements.

Some joint promotion is already undertaken through the council’s website where the cultural facilities are all represented and at the Tourist Information Centre. There has been discussion about developing a more collaborative approach at the Tourist Information Centre, possibly through the development of a small, shared exhibition area. If managed effectively this could both enhance the visitor experience at the Centre and provide comprehensive information about Bathurst’s impressive array of cultural facilities.

It is suggested that Bathurst Regional Council considers the development of a joint marketing plan for the cultural services of Bathurst that could address issues such as cross promotion, online presence, the use of email lists and other contemporary communication strategies.

WEBSITE

At present the cultural institutions have a presence on a range of websites including Bathurst Regional Council and Bathurst Tourist Information Centre as well as the individual websites of the National Motor Racing Museum, the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, the Dead Bones Society (program of the AFFM), Bathurst Regional Gallery and Hill End Artists in residence program (program of BRAG).

Each website addresses a particular audience or aspect of the operations of the cultural institutions of Bathurst and together provide an impressive array of information about the cultural organisations and their collections. It is suggested that Bathurst Regional Council considers the development of an overarching web presence plan for the cultural facilities of Bathurst (including the Bathurst Historical Society). This could address issues such as:

- Shared web management resources (including staff and software)
- Online audiences (who are they and what are they seeking)
- Opportunities for collaboration (such as the suggested collaboration between Chifley Home, Old Parliament House and the other Prime Ministers residences)
- Opportunities for audience interaction and collaboration (such as blogs, wikis, online discussions/forums)
- The use of social networking facilities such as Facebook and My Space
- Opportunities for online educational resources and interactivity (there may be opportunities to link in with the small schools program and the School of Distance Education in Dubbo)
ANNUAL EVENT

The cultural facilities of Bathurst currently participate in various events on the Bathurst calendar, such as the Autumn Colours festival, racing days and Australia Day. There is potential to develop an annual event focusing on the cultural facilities of Bathurst. One option would be to create a 1940s event, growing out of the 1940s day currently held at Chifley Home. This event could focus on either Bathurst during WWII or the post war period in Bathurst and could incorporate the story of the Chifleys (with collection material in both Chifley Home and Bathurst and District Historical Society), the arrival of artists Donald Friend and Russell Drysdale in Hill End (and related collections held by the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery), the development of Mount Panorama as a motor racing site (and possibly material from the Penzig Speedway collection), the last days of the School of Arts library, the adoption of significant buildings during the war (such as the use of the building that now houses the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum building as an army canteen and the use of Abercrombie House by the Women’s Land Army. Other elements that could be pulled in include a 1940s film festival at the local cinema, a 1940s dance night with the conservatorium of music, performances of the play *A local Man: A play about Ben Chifley* and an Indiana Jones night at the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Whilst some sites, such as the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery and the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, have developed strong and unique education programs others such as the National motor Racing Museum, have not had access to staff with experience in this area of museum practice. There is great potential to expand programs such as the children’s writing workshop *Deadbones Society* to other locations such as the National Motor Racing Museum and the Bathurst District Historical Society Museum. Similarly, material from the various museum collections could be developed into “museum in a box” materials in the same manner as the gallery has created. Two examples of this concept are outlined below.

**Australian War Memorial Boxes**


*If you can’t make it to the Memorial or want to add value to your visit, borrow a Memorial Box. They contain artefacts that students can handle, as well as photographs, case studies, uniforms, a video, oral histories, teacher’s notes, and more. Memorial Boxes can be adapted for use across many areas of study and are accessible to a wide range of students, from lower primary to senior secondary.*

There are six titles in the series:

Box 01 – *Australia in the First World War*
Box 02 – *For service to others*
Box 03 – *Too dark for the Light Horse: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the defence forces*
Box 04 – *Australia under attack!*
Box 05 – *We want to do more: the experience of women and children during the Second World War*
Box 06 – *Our war in the Pacific, 1942*
Australian Museum - Museum in a Box

*Museum in a Box®* is an exciting outreach program for schools and students in New South Wales. There are over twenty different boxes containing a treasure trove of real museum specimens, casts, artefacts, dioramas, photographs, video and audio tapes, games, books and computer software. The fun activities for children are explained in the Teachers’ notes and information about the topic is given on large panels. Each box has a theme and the activities are linked to the school syllabus.

*Individual boxes are currently available each school term for set loan periods of three weeks. Museum in a Box® can be sent to and collected from any school within New South Wales.*

As outlined above, there is great potential for collaboration between the staff at the cultural facilities in Bathurst. There is already a level of collaboration between the gallery and the library for the development of school holiday programs. By looking more holistically at the resource needs for education and public programs, it may be possible to expand support for this vital area of museum and gallery practice to ensure all cultural facilities in Bathurst have access to educational expertise. It may also be possible to tap into specific areas of expertise from other areas of council operation such as youth and aged care services.

**CROSS COUNCIL COLLABORATION**

Some collaboration is already occurring between the cultural facilities of Bathurst and other areas of council operation, in particular the Tourist Information Centre. There is potential to expand upon such relationships to the benefit of both. Areas such as audience development, marketing & promotion, youth services, aged care services and website development could all benefit from collaborative programming with the cultural facilities of Bathurst.