

## Executive Summary

In 2003, Tweed Shire Council received funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts for the preparation of a combined strategic plan for the three historical societies at Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah and Uki. This grant followed agreement by the societies to work together to create a single regional museum for the Tweed Shire.

With many years work on collaborative projects, the three historical societies of Tweed Shire have built an effective and forward-looking partnership that creates a strong foundation for museum development. They have worked together on a number of joint projects, including research, publications, an exhibition, a web site and promotional work, and more recently on the community based heritage study.

In many of these projects, Tweed Shire Council has been a partner or supporter. The historical societies value the assistance they have received from Council and wish to strengthen and formalise this partnership to see their museums and collections thrive and develop over the next century.

The volunteers of the three historical societies in the Tweed Shire have built an outstanding cultural resource about the people, places and history of the area. This includes significant artefact collections, outstanding collections of historic photographs, extensive archives and research files. The collections are a substantial community asset that reflects well on the generosity of local families and community appreciation of the value of their history. They are also a legacy to the next generation. This legacy needs to be properly managed and maintained to preserve the value and significance of the collections.

For many years, the historical societies at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah have been operating in substandard buildings that pose a threat to their important heritage collections. The current buildings do not provide the minimum standards and facilities required by modern museums. With investment in better facilities, the museums can play a more dynamic role in the culture and economy of the Tweed Shire, supporting tourism development, enhancing volunteer capacity, hosting travelling exhibitions and providing improved services to the community.

This strategic plan provides for the staged development of the three historical society museums into a single sustainable Tweed River Regional Museum. Positioning the museum development as a regional museum will enable Council to tap into grant funding for capital works, recurrent funding and salary subsidies.

Key elements of the strategic plan are:

Formation of a combined Tweed River Regional Museum, based on the historical society museums at Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah and Uki, and operating as a single entity managed by Council. The vision of the new museum is to present the stories of the Tweed caldera from the mountain to the sea.

Each of the three destinations that comprise the regional museum will present a distinctive part of the story of the Tweed, with the River, the caldera and the people of the Tweed Valley as linking themes running through three museum sites.

A partnership agreement between Council and three historical societies, will see the societies gift to Council all their collections, archives, historic photographs and research files. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) underpins the partnership. A draft MOU is included in this plan for further discussion between Council and the historical societies. Pending agreement and finalisation of the MOU, it is hoped the partnership agreement will be signed by July 1 2004.

The museum will be managed by an experienced curator/ coordinator, appointed in 2005. A grant will be sought for 50% funding of this position for three years.

Members and volunteers of the historical societies will be actively involved in all aspects of the work of the museum. The historical societies will continue to operate at the three sites working with the curator/ coordinator.

The museum curator will work with a Museum Advisory Committee, constituted as a 355 committee of Council. The Advisory Committee will assist and advise Council and the curator on all matters relating to the development, funding, policies and planning of the Tweed River Regional Museum. The Committee includes representatives of the three historical societies.

Staged redevelopment of the museums at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah will see the buildings upgraded to provide improved facilities for residents and visitors. This will include:

- Permanent and temporary exhibition spaces
- Access to travelling exhibitions from the major cultural institutions. (These travelling exhibitions from state and national museums, archives and libraries, are currently not available to the people of the Tweed Shire for want of adequate spaces and staff)
- Climate controlled storage
- Community access space for and about community groups, topical themes and private collections
- Research and education facilities for expanded school programs and life long learning

Redevelopment of the buildings will entail new professionally designed exhibitions, based on detailed exhibition plans. A comprehensive museum development plan in this report outlines all the strategies and tasks for a five-year program of museum development.

Uki and South Arm Historical Society, located in a modest building adjacent to the butter factory, will continue to evolve as a heritage resource centre, with an emphasis on historic photographs and the documentation of community owned collections. The Society will play an important role in the interpretation of Uki as a living village, supporting Council strategies to promote tourism and the economic development of the villages of the Tweed Shire. The three sites of the Tweed River Regional Museum will work together to encourage visitors and residents to explore and discover the places, landscapes, people and stories of the Tweed Shire.

# Contents: Tweed River Regional Museum Strategic Plan

## Executive summary

1. Introduction	4
Background and Context for Museum Development	
Summary of work undertaken	
2. Snapshot of the Tweed Shire	7
Tourism	
Other collections and museums	
3. Context for museum development	12
The case for development	
Regional museum policy	
Museum trends	
4. Tweed Heads Museum	17
5. Murwillumbah Museum	24
6. Uki and South Arm Historical Society	29
7. Tweed River Regional Museum	33
Role of the Museum	
Vision and Themes	
Strategic Goals	
Summary of the Museum Development Plan	
Key result areas	
8. Draft MOU	38
9. Museum Development Plan	44
Appendices:	
1. Acknowledgements	55
2. Capital Works brief, Tweed Heads	56
3. Site options paper, Tweed Heads Museum	64
4. Capital Works brief, Murwillumbah	68
5. Draft duty statement for curator/manager	74
6. Draft collections policy	75

Cover photo courtesy of Trevor Worden, Murwillumbah

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Context for Museum Development

In 2003 Tweed Shire Council received funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts for the preparation of a combined strategic plan for the three historical societies at Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah and Uki. This grant followed agreement by the societies to work together to create a single regional museum for the Tweed Shire.

The need for redevelopment of the museums was emphasised in a critical report by the NSW Museums and Galleries Foundation on the poor state of the museum building at Tweed Heads. Murwillumbah also operates in a building which floods during heavy rain, placing collections and exhibitions at risk. Both Murwillumbah and Tweed are in substandard buildings that pose a threat to the survival of the collections. The museums lack the elementary facilities for the protection of their collections and the sound operation of a modern museum. In particular there is:

- inadequate collection storage space which is damaging the collections
- inadequate working space for volunteers, which diminishes the museums' capacity to attract and keep volunteers
- no space for even small scale travelling exhibitions, representing a loss of cultural and educational opportunities to the community
- no space or resources to develop changing exhibitions to attract return visitors, particularly from the local community
- no space for education and community activities that are crucial to the proper functioning of museums
- poor security for the buildings and collections

Unlike most historical societies that tend to work in isolation, the three historical societies of Tweed Shire have built an effective and forward-looking partnership that creates a strong foundation for museum development. Over the years they have collaborated on a number of joint projects, including research, publications, an exhibition, a web site and promotional work.

The agreement of the three historical societies to work together to create a single sustainable regional museum, is most unusual and forward thinking. The work done on the strategic plan in 2003, and the ideas generated during numerous meetings, has established a very strong, collegial team across the three societies. The result is a visionary but practical plan that sets an interesting precedent for other councils and struggling historical societies.

## 1.2 Strategic Planning Work in 2003

During 2003 the societies worked collaboratively with the museum consultant to analyse the needs of the museums, understand the collections, assess the significance of the collections, agree on a new mission and strategic goals for the regional museum and discuss the management framework and tasks for museum redevelopment over the next three to five years. Work on the strategic plan has included:

- SWOT analysis of the current state of the collections and buildings
- Review of collection management issues
- Development of detailed object files to better document the most significant objects in the collections
- Training in significance assessment of objects and collections
- Understanding of cultural development opportunities in the Tweed
- Visits to other museums and collections, including Minjungbal, the Tweed River Agricultural Society, the Sporting Hall of Fame display and the South Sea Islander room at the Tweed Heads Cultural Centre
- Meeting with TACTIC General Manager to ensure the new museum supports the tourism goals and strategies for Tweed Shire
- Discussions with the Taskforce Project Manager of the Tweed Heads Town Centre Project
- Identification of funding opportunities and discussions with the NSW Ministry for the Arts
- Interim paper on museum development needs
- Discussions with the Tweed River Art Gallery about co-operation and collaborative projects between the regional museum and the Gallery
- Draft capital works briefs for the redevelopment of the museum sites at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah
- Discussion on a new mission and strategic goals for the regional museum
- Draft duty statement for a full time curator in 2005
- Draft partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding between the historical societies and Tweed Shire Council
- Draft constitution for the proposed Tweed River Regional Museum Advisory Committee
- Draft collection policy for the proposed Tweed River Regional Museum
- Analysis of site options for the Tweed Heads Maritime Museum
- A grant application to the Ministry for the Arts for a thematic study of heritage collections in 2004, building on the work of the community based heritage study and providing for a detailed analysis of the museum and community collections
- Grant application to the NSW Heritage Office for matching funding to create an exhibition from the work done on the community based heritage study

Preparation of the strategic plan has been a strongly collaborative process between the consultant and members of the historical societies. The volunteers have made an enormous contribution to the museum plan. Hundreds of hours of volunteer time has gone into meetings, collection research and drafting various papers. They have done valuable work on the capital works briefs, collection themes and a draft constitution for the proposed new advisory committee. In addition to regular strategic planning meetings, the volunteers have worked hard during 2003 to document the history and provenance of the most significant items in their collections, creating dozens of object files for their most significant items. This work will continue in 2004. Developing better documented collections is a time consuming but essential foundation for new exhibitions in the proposed regional museum. This will help to ensure the new museum is content driven, and not just a capital works project.

During 2003 the historical societies also worked jointly on the community based heritage study for the Tweed Shire. Building on this work, Council was successful in

its application to the Ministry for the Arts for funding towards a thematic study of heritage collections in the Tweed, receiving \$20,000 for Stage 1 of the project. The study will assist in the identification and documentation of heritage collections in the Tweed Shire and refinement of the collection policy. The project will culminate in 2005 in a joint exhibition in the City of the Arts space profiling the places, collections and stories that comprise the heritage of Tweed Shire. It will help to give the work done on the community based heritage study a public interpretation of lasting value. This project will give the new regional museum a high profile during the City of the Arts program, particularly in its exploration of the theme of distinctiveness.



## 2. Snapshot of the Tweed Shire<sup>1</sup>

Tweed Shire covers 1303 square kilometres and adjoins the NSW shires of Byron, Lismore and Kyogle, with the NSW/Queensland border to its north where it divides the twin towns of Tweed Heads and Coolangatta.

The Mt Warning caldera underpins the area's high biodiversity, scenic values and rich agricultural land. It also shapes the social and cultural identity of the Shire. The Tweed River basin is a unique and diverse environment that includes three world-heritage listed national parks. The Shire has 37 kms of natural coastline, wetlands and estuarine forests, and some of the richest pastoral and farm land in NSW.

Prior to European settlement, the area was blanketed in sub-tropical forest and was home to the Bundjalung people. Many of the Shire's towns and villages derive their names from the language of the local Aboriginal people.

The Tweed River was the first highway and conduit of people and goods through the district. Farms, settlements and villages formed along its banks and tributaries. The area was settled by timber-getters around 1844; the first school opened in 1871; and by the 1890's, the river port of Tumbulgum was the centre of population. The focus of population moved to Murwillumbah when the municipality was created in 1902. The current Tweed Shire was formed in 1947 when the Municipality of Murwillumbah was amalgamated with the Shire of Tweed.

Today some 74,000 people live in Tweed, scattered through 17 villages, two towns, and the major urban areas of Tweed Heads and South Tweed. The last twenty years have seen enormous growth, with the population increasing, 11% between the 1996 and 2001 census, largely due to southern retirees drawn by the temperate climate and relaxed lifestyle. Trends suggest the population will reach 86,653 by 2006 and 100,000 by the end of the decade.

The retail, hospitality, and tourism industries are major employers, while construction, fishing, health, and light industry are other significant contributors to the local economy. The retail sector is the largest employer in the Tweed Shire, accounting for 18.5% of total employment, well above the NSW average of 14.2%. This reflects the importance of tourism in the economy of the Shire. Agriculture also plays a major part in the economy of the Tweed (5.5%) compared to the rest of NSW (3.4%), although the numbers employed in this sector have declined over the last decade.

The Tweed Shire is one of the most rapidly growing areas of Australia and it has undergone dramatic changes over the last 20 years, particularly on the coast. The sea change trend is behind many of these changes. In 2001, 23% of the population was over 65, twice the NSW average. However, the Shire also has a high proportion of children under 19, 25%. Youth unemployment is twice the state average. Incomes in the north coast region are the lowest in NSW. In 2001 over 43% received some form of Centrelink income support, compared to 27% in NSW.

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from material on Tweed Shire Council's web site, and the Tweed Futures Issues paper, and discussion with Council officers and

Tweed Shire Council faces major challenges in accommodating high rates of population growth, while protecting the environment of the Shire, providing services for an aging population, and employment opportunities for its large population of young people. The Tweed Futures Strategic Plan will be an important tool to balance the complex demands on the Shire, and within that, cultural and social policies and strategies will help to achieve a sustainable future based on triple bottom line principles.

The regional museum has much to contribute to the way the Tweed Shire tackles these major challenges. Museums are social institutions that help build social capital, enhance community connections and develop a sense of shared identity and esteem. Museum exhibitions and programs can explore environmental and social themes and build community understanding of issues such as sustainability. Research is now showing that cultural infrastructure and a lively cultural life, is a crucial factor in creating dynamic economies. The proposed regional museum will focus on building audiences among older people, families, and young people of the Shire, ensuring that its exhibitions, design and public programs meet the needs of these groups.

The museum development plan in this report has been devised within the broad parameters and goals of Council's 1999 Cultural Policy. The museum plan incorporates the eight key strategic elements or principles in the policy: distinctiveness, equity and access, cultural diversity, built and natural environment, youth, employment and economic development, training and skills development and facilities. As the cultural policy is further refined it is recommended that the main elements of the museum plan are detailed in the strategies in the cultural policy.

## 2.2 Tourism

Tourism and related businesses are vital to the economy of the Tweed Shire and offer good prospects for sustainable growth. Tweed Heads is the southern point of an extended city of 600,000 people. The Gold Coast and north to Brisbane provide 43% of the Tweed's domestic overnight visitors and substantial numbers of day-trippers. The Tweed Shire is capitalising on its differences with the adjacent Gold Coast and working to protect its natural environments and landscapes. Investment in high quality and authentic cultural infrastructure such as the new Tweed River Art Gallery further differentiates the Tweed from southern Queensland.

Key tourism themes for the Tweed are the environment, arts and crafts, and food and agriculture.

Tweed and Coolangatta Tourism Inc (TACTIC) is the body responsible for research and marketing. Its main target markets are:

**Brisbane Short Breaks (1-3 nights) – (socially aware)**

Want rejuvenating change based on doing & experiencing things out of reach in daily life. Generally couples leaving kids at home, 35 – 59 years. Looking to relax with partner or by themselves. Middle to upper socio-economic. High yield

SEQ / Rural NSW Young Couples & Singles – (young optimism)  
Seeking an escape from reality & normal city life. Seeking a social adventure.  
Camping / Rainforest experiences / Clubs & disco's

SEQ / Rural NSW Family – (traditional family life)  
Young parents (parents under 45 years), traveling with kids

SEQ / Rural NSW Seniors – (real conservatism)  
Empty nesters. Historic places and things of interest. Value for money, 'predictable' experience.

At present, the historical societies are unable to play an effective role in developing or enhancing the tourism economy of the Tweed Shire. But with investment, the Tweed River Regional Museum will be an important addition to the attractions of the Shire and a wet weather alternative to the emphasis on beaches and nature tourism. Well-designed interpretation will see the three sites of the Tweed River Regional Museum working together to encourage visitors and residents to explore and discover the places, landscapes, people and stories of the Tweed Shire. During the research and development phase, the museum should work closely with TACTIC to understand visitor needs and develop synergies with the key messages used by TACTIC in their marketing.

## 2.3 Other Museums and Collections

The Tweed River Regional Museum will assist and work co-operatively with other museums, heritage and places, and community and family owned collections.

Other collections in the Tweed Shire include:

### Tweed River Art Gallery, Murwillumbah

The opening of a new, spacious Gallery in 2004 opens more possibilities for collaborative work between the Gallery and the regional museum. The Gallery has always been a strong supporter of the historical societies and it has occasionally hosted travelling exhibitions of heritage materials, with the historical societies adding additional material. In 2001, the historical societies worked closely with the Gallery on a joint exhibition for the Centenary of Federation. The Tweed Heads Historical Society donated two significant paintings by Herbert Simpson which now hang in the Gallery. An interdisciplinary and collaborative exhibition about the Tweed River is planned for 2006. The museum development plan envisages a close working relationship with the Gallery.

### South Sea Islander Room, Tweed Heads Civic Centre

A small exhibition about the history of the South Sea Islanders in the Tweed Shire, primarily based around historic photographs with some artefacts. The historical societies assisted with some research and photographs for the display. The display interprets the abduction of South Sea Islanders to work in Australia, their contribution to the district, and the resilience of families and individuals under difficult circumstances.

### Sporting Hall of Fame, foyer of the Tweed Heads Civic Centre

A small display of sporting memorabilia associated with leading sporting figures in the Tweed district. The display environment has very high light levels that are not appropriate for the long term care of the material. The sporting clothes are poorly mounted. Discussions could be held to consider whether the sporting hall of fame concept would be better incorporated in the regional museum where the memorabilia and related archives could be properly managed.

### Lisnagar, Kynnunboon via Murwillumbah

Privately owned, Lisnagar is a two-storey Queensland style house built in 1902 for Edward Twohill. The house still has much of its original furniture, outbuildings and a magnificent stand of giant bamboo. Its significance is recognised by its listing on the Register of the National Estate. The house is open on Sundays and by appointment for group tours.

### World Heritage Rainforest Centre, Murwillumbah

This is a combined Visitor Information Centre and interpretive facility about the surrounding world heritage national parks, and their geology, natural history and Aboriginal history. New displays in the redeveloped Murwillumbah Museum will complement the range and scope of the Rainforest Centre exhibits.

### Tweed River Agricultural Show Society, Murwillumbah

The Show Society is currently developing an exhibition room to house a small collection of memorabilia, and to interpret the rich history of the Show since it began in 1890. The space will be available for hire and for functions. Given the multi purpose use of the room, its high light levels, and the fact that the showgrounds are subject to flooding, consideration could be given to a partnership between the Show Society and the Murwillumbah museum for the professional care of the heritage collections related to the history of the Show. The Murwillumbah Historical Society already has photographs and items in its collection about the Show. The regional museum could work with the Show Society to develop a well-designed and robust exhibition for the new function space, while protecting the fragile heritage objects in the museum, which is not far from the Showground. Such an arrangement could be a model for further partnerships with community groups that have significant archives and heritage collections.

### Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre, South Tweed Heads

This cultural centre and resource museum is located adjacent to a rare surviving bora ring, with nature walks in the adjoining reserve. Interpretive displays explore Aboriginal culture pre and post contact. Both the Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah Historical Societies donated their local Aboriginal collections to Minjungbal. Murwillumbah also donated the Margaret Kay collection which forms the centrepiece of the exhibitions. This collection is of outstanding interest and significance.

Minjungbal is an important social and cultural resource for local Aboriginal people, holding classes in health, art, tourism and bush regeneration. When the centre was established it was a model for the development of other keeping places and cultural centres around the State.

The exhibitions opened in 1984 and now need renewal. If requested, the regional museum could work in partnership with Minjungbal to promote the Centre and provide advice and training in collection management and interpretation.

During the exhibition development work, further consultations should be held with the custodians of the Minjungbal collections to maximise opportunities for cross promotion and complementary displays.



Part of the Margaret Kay collection at Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre, donated to the Cultural Centre by the Murwillumbah Historical Society. The collection assembled by Margaret Kay includes traditional artefacts and souvenirs made by indigenous people from around the world. Such diverse collections are now recognised as significant cultural and historical records. Margaret Kay was a prominent activist and community leader, and her collection was an inspiration for building cultural esteem and promoting awareness of the culture and experience of Aboriginal people in the Tweed area. If the custodians wished, the collection would be worthy of listing on the NSW State Heritage Register.

## 3. Context for Museum Development

### 3.1 The Case for Development

Over many decades, museum volunteers in the Tweed Shire have built an outstanding cultural resource about the people, places and history of the area. This includes significant artefact collections, outstanding collections of historic photographs by local photographers, extensive archives and research files. The significance and potential of these collections is not fully appreciated in their current buildings.

The collections of the combined historical societies at Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah and Uki are diverse and significant. They interpret important themes in the history and development of the region. The collections include many rare and unique items with strong connections to the people, places, themes and industries of the Tweed River.

The collections are a substantial community asset that reflects well on the generosity of local families and community appreciation of the value of their history. They are also a legacy to the next generation. This legacy needs to be properly managed and maintained to preserve the value and significance of the collections.

There is a strong group of volunteers at the museums who are already working together to develop collaborative programs and jointly promote the museums of the Tweed. Cooperation includes working together on the Community Heritage Study during 2003, a joint brochure, a joint web site and working together on a strategic framework for the three museums.

However, the museum volunteers are aging and museum operations can be at risk in circumstances where two or three key volunteers are ill or committed to caring for family members. Succession planning, volunteer recruitment and a broader resource base, both human and financial are essential to safeguard the collections and the museums.

With investment in better facilities, the museums can play a more dynamic role in the culture and economy of the Tweed. Redevelopment of the museums will give them the capacity to collaborate and enhance the value of other cultural activities in the Tweed, particularly the City of the Arts program and interdisciplinary exhibitions with the new Tweed River Regional Gallery. With Council auspicing redevelopment of the museums, they will be able to attract significant grant funding to develop more lively and engaging programs.

Tweed Shire Council, in partnership with the museum volunteers, is well positioned to redevelop the museums into a new regional museum spanning three sites: Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah and Uki. While the regional museum will be managed by a paid museum curator, the continued involvement of volunteers will be crucial to the new museum's success.

There is tremendous potential for the museums to contribute to Council's tourism strategy and provide better services to visitors. The museums can be an attractive wet weather destination; they can orient visitors to the history and character of the region,

and function as a jumping off point to encourage exploration and discovery of the Shire.

Good museums are also social and educational centres that contribute to community esteem and a sense of place. They build social connections and can be a point of exchange and communication for a region that is attracting many new retirees and that has a rapidly growing young population.

The whole north coast has a pressing need for properly designed museum exhibition spaces and paid professional staff. Museum volunteers are struggling to maintain services, look after significant collections and meet the increasing expectations of visitors and the community. Due to poor museum buildings and lack of trained staff, the region is presently unable to access travelling exhibitions. There are no museum professionals working with museum collections between Port Macquarie and the Queensland border. This has the flow on effect of severely limiting the capacity of volunteers and councils to attract grant funding and improve the care and interpretation of heritage collections

In summary the foundations for museum development in the Tweed Shire lie in its:

- Significant collections
- Exemplary partnership between three historical societies, and between the historical societies and other cultural groups
- Active and involved volunteers
- A rapidly growing region currently without quality museum infrastructure or services
- Demand from visitors and the community for access to relevant exhibitions
- Missing link in tourism infrastructure
- City of the Arts and new Tweed River Art Gallery provide a strong foundation for interdisciplinary and collaborative programs linking art, heritage and other forms of cultural expression
- Support from Council
- Position the development as a regional museum for sustainable development and to maximise funding for capital works, salary subsidy, exhibition development and programs

To maximise grant assistance and service the needs of a rapidly growing community and a substantial tourism industry, Council should develop a regional museum for the Tweed, in partnership with the three museums and based on agreement with the historical society members and their committees.

Positioning the museum redevelopments as a regional museum will optimise funding for buildings and exhibitions, give access to grants for salary subsidies for museum staff, and put the museums on a sustainable footing for the future.

### 3.2 What is a Regional Museum?

The Ministry for the Arts uses the term 'regional museum' to refer to the exemplary museums it wishes to encourage in the important regional cities of NSW. A major part

of the Ministry's annual \$1.9m grant program for museums is framed to assist the development and growth of regional museums.

The NSW museum policy states:

The Ministry will encourage the development of a number of regional museums around the State. These museums will act as centres of best practice and work to provide support to the region's community museums.

A regional museum is defined as a facility providing:

- ready access to information concerning the natural and cultural heritage of a defined region for the general public,
- effective care and protection of items of significance,
- a comprehensive schools and community education program
- public facilities able to handle up to 100,000 visitors a year,
- participates in research projects with other institutions,
- facilities able to receive high quality exhibitions from elsewhere.

Regional museums will

- be staffed by paid museum professionals,
- have well designed storage
- have permanent and temporary exhibition spaces,
- have high standards of care for collections and
- work towards establishing and maintaining similar standards of care for collections within the region.

The scale and style of developments will reflect the distinctive features of the region.<sup>2</sup>

An important mechanism for providing support to a region's community museums is through the employment of Regional Museums Officers (RMO) that are strategically placed within the network of regional museums, and enabling these positions to carry out programs which will increase standards of practice within a region.

The policy recognises the regional services offered by the Museums and Galleries Foundation of NSW and the State Government cultural institutions. It is intended that the RMO's will work in close liaison with these organisations and compliment the services offered by them.

Regional Museums Officers will be established in partnership with local councils where a regional museum can show evidence of its ability to sustain a program of works that will assist surrounding volunteer run community museums in raising standards of care and operation. They must also show evidence of the financial viability of the position once Ministry funding has ceased.

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<sup>2</sup> NSW Ministry for the Arts Museums program Policy, March 2000. The Carr Government's arts policy also reaffirms the Government's commitment to work with local government to develop regional museums in NSW. See Arts for Everyone, Labor's cultural development policy, Australian Labor Party, 2003

The aims and purpose of these positions will be:

- to provide a coordinated and strategic approach to the development of museums within each region;
- to support volunteer and community museums in operating their museums and caring for their moveable cultural heritage collections;
- to work with volunteer run museums in increasing standards and understanding of museum practice.

Given the development needs of the existing museum buildings at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah, it is recommended that consideration of the wider regional role of the museum be the subject of a separate consultancy in 2007, assuming a successful funding application to the Ministry for the Arts. This would necessarily involve consultation with adjacent councils and museums, assessment of museum needs and opportunities, and preparation of some kind of plan.

### 3.3 Museum Trends

Since the Historical Societies at Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads were established in 1959 and 1985 respectively, there have been tremendous changes in museum policies, programs and practice. While there is a desire to retain the flavour and character of the existing museum displays, the redevelopment of the museum buildings, collections and exhibitions must take account of current best practice and trends in museum philosophy and practice. Some of the key developments in museum practice that the regional museum should take account of include:

- New forms of museums such as heritage centres, open air museums, eco museums, interactive science museums, keeping places, halls of fame and virtual museums
- Greater emphasis on interpretation and thematic exhibitions based on a storyline, rather than just displaying objects
- Emphasis on people stories not just objects, and sophisticated use of new technologies to tell stories and explore places and landscapes
- Temporary and travelling exhibitions to attract return visitors. Temporary exhibitions may be developed from within the museum or be travelling displays. Travelling displays may involve the development of a specifically local component.
- Community access spaces to show collections owned by families, community groups and local collectors
- Emphasis on well planned public programs to accompany and enliven exhibitions
- Inclusion of a café and shop as an essential part of the museum experience
- Recognition that museums are social places for conversations between friends, families and the community
- Museums as places for lifelong learning and education activities; education programs not just for young people

- Importance of interactives in museum exhibits, learning by experience and doing, not just looking
- Activity rooms and play spaces specifically designed for young children
- The web is now a central part of how museums work, providing access to collections, and marketing museum programs
- Fewer objects on display but more access to collections through the web
- Exhibitions and museum marketing increasingly driven by audience research, understanding what visitors want and ensuring the museum meets their needs
- Increased standards in collection management, collections research and documentation and conservation