

Report on *Cultural Planning in Local Government* forum series April to July 2014

More than 50 of Victoria's 79 councils have participated in a series of forums on cultural planning over the past months. These events aimed to develop an agreed cultural planning framework for Victorian councils that will contribute to more effective practice and better outcomes for municipalities. A publication as a resource for the future will be produced at the end of the series. The forums are being led by the Cultural Development Network (CDN) working in partnership with the Municipal Association's Arts and Culture Committee and host councils: City of Melbourne; Corangamite, Gannawarra and Mitchell Shires; and Latrobe City.

Councils across Victoria are increasingly developing cultural plans, but research undertaken by CDN in 2013 showed there was a lack of an agreed framework and informing principles. The need for more connection between cultural plans and other strategic council documents, particularly council plans, was identified. The research also found that there needed to be more systematic use of data and evidence; a greater focus on outcomes, rather than inputs and activities; more cohesive theories of change and stronger evaluation practices.

The process introduced in the forums encourages councils to implement cultural planning that has six attributes: *based on values set by the Council plan, directed towards goals, informed by evidence, underpinned by a theory of change, focused on outcomes and respondent to evaluation.* Individual councils' decisions about specific activities will not be determined by the framework, but will be dependent on strategic direction, community needs, issues and resources of their LGA. The final forums in July will cover integration of all the ideas, their application in specific local government contexts and the practicalities of writing and using a plan.



Councillors and officers working in Forum 1, Kerang, May 2014

An information session over drinks completes the series. Other stakeholders in the cultural planning process are invited: CEOs, senior managers, local artists, local leaders and elected representatives, to ensure their understanding of the work and ideas shared. This will be on **Wednesday 30 July, 4.30- 6.00 pm**, at City of Melbourne's new *Library at the Dock*, 107 Victoria Harbour Promenade, Melbourne. Speakers will include Cr. Rod Fyffe, Chair of MAV's Arts and Culture Committee and Andrew Abbott, the new Director of Arts Victoria.

More information available from www.culturaldevelopment.net.au.

CDN Team: John Smithies, Kim Dunphy, Lyndall Metzke and Leda Yazgin.

Registration for the forum series: <http://www.mav.asn.au/>

Enquiries: Dr. Kim Dunphy, kim.dunphy@culturaldevelopment.net.au or 0417 038 824