

Forbes Arts & Cultural Working Group Forbes, NSW www.geocities.com/forbesculturalplan

PRESS RELEASE

10 July, 2005

Att'n Michael @ The Forbes Advocate
For Tuesday's paper
From FACWG media liaison person
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Suggested photo: The Forbes librarian and library visitors filling in the survey form and putting it into a collection box.

WHAT MAKES FORBES SPECIAL FOR YOU?

Watch out for the Forbes Arts and Cultural Working Group's survey form in your mailbox on Wednesday asking you 'What makes Forbes special', and what you think can be done to make the shire an even better place to live in.

The two page survey form will be delivered to each household as part of the community consultation process now being conducted by the Forbes Arts and Cultural Working Group's for the cultural plan it is developing for the shire. The form will also be available at the Forbes Library, Forbes Shire Council and the Forbes Advocate office, and will be distributed through service clubs, churches, and all schools within the Shire. It can also be downloaded from the working group's web site, www.geocities.com/forbesculturalplan, and returned by email.

The Forbes Arts and Cultural Working Group is an independent community group which has undertaken to develop a 3-5 year cultural plan to be presented to the Forbes Shire Council on completion in 2006. This visionary document will highlight what the people of Forbes and district want for our community, not just in the fields of arts and entertainment, but also community cultural amenities and services, urban and landscape design, heritage conservation, parks and recreation. The plan will include points of action and a proposed budget so that sponsorship and grant money can be sought to implement it.

"We are following the NSW Department of Local Government and the Ministry of Arts publication *Cultural Planning Guidelines* which states that in healthy and vital communities all residents, regardless of their backgrounds, should have the opportunity to express themselves creatively and engage with local culture," the working group's convener, Merrill Findlay, said.

"I really believe in this sentiment and that is why this survey is so important to the group. A cultural plan has to be based on community consultation and participation, otherwise

the plan will have no claim to represent what the people of Forbes want or consider important to their way of life.”

“The survey is the first step in the community consultation process and over the coming months we will also approach the many diverse groups in and around Forbes for their input,” Ms Findlay said.

The survey asks four questions about the Forbes way of life, about what needs to be preserved or developed, and about what is not yet available in Forbes but could be in the future.

“I think the word ‘culture’ is some times thought of as just high art or opera, but it is so much broader. As we say on the survey, culture about lifestyle, identity, history and a sense of place.”

“We ask that the residents of the Forbes shire take the time to fill in this survey, as the information we collect will be the foundation of the plan,” said Ms Findlay. “We don’t require personal details like a name or address, so any information will remain anonymous and confidential.”

“I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the group who have put some much time and effort into the survey, including Marg Willmott, Sian Dyce, Jo Erskine and Kylie Grayson. I would also like to thank the Forbes Shire Council for generously assisting us with the printing of the survey,” Ms Findlay said.

So have your say by responding to the survey and return to one of the locations listed on the back of the form by 1 August.

If you would like more information on the cultural plan and the group’s work you can visit the website: www.geocities.com/forbesculturalplan The group is always open to new members and meets on the first Monday of the month from 5.30pm-7pm, in the Concourse room at the Forbes Town Hall.

Kylie Grayson
Forbes Arts & Cultural Working Group
10 July 2005

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