

TWEED

Strategic Plan

REGIONAL

2019/20 - 2020/21

MUSEUM



TWEED REGIONAL
MUSEUM

Council acknowledges the Ngandowal and Minyungbal people of the Bundjalung nation, in particular the Goodjinburra, Tul-gi-gin and Moorung-Moobah clans as being the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water within the Tweed Shire boundaries.



Contents

A community facility of Tweed Shire Council	4
Our Vision	4
Guiding principles and values	4
About us: Legacy, context, reach	6
Legacy	6
Context	9
Governance	9
Reach	10
Who lives in the Tweed?	11
Who visits in the Tweed?	11
Who visits museums and what do we know about them?	12
Who engages with us online?	13
What we do	14
Collection, development, care and access	14
Exhibitions and programs	16
How we work	18
We collaborate	18
Goal and key strategies	19
Appendix 1	25
Internal SWOT analysis	25

A community facility of Tweed Shire Council

Tweed Regional Museum is an operational team of the Tweed Shire Council's Community and Cultural Services unit under the Community and Natural Resources Division.

The Community Strategic Plan 2017 - 2027 provides the basis for Council's Integrated Planning suite of documents, identifying the community's main priorities and aspirations for its future along with key direction for achieving these outcomes.

The Museum's Strategic and Business Plans are linked to the Community Plan through Council's Delivery Program 2017 - 2021, annual Operational Plans, and other key Policies.

Our Vision

Preserving stories, sharing history: building an inspiring museum about the people, places, environment and culture of the Tweed for the benefit and enjoyment of visitors and the diverse communities of the region.

Guiding principles and values

The Museum is guided by a number of specific policies and procedures. These have been developed, together with other relevant Council policies and procedures, and provide the basis for Museum operations.

- *Tweed Regional Museum Collection Policy*
- *Tweed Regional Museum Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017 (new Strategic and Business Plans in development for 2019 and beyond)*
- *Tweed Regional Museum Advisory Committee Operational Guidelines and Terms of Reference.*

- *Tweed Regional Museum Deductible Gift Recipient Fund Policy and Procedure*
- *Tweed Shire Council Cultural Plan*
- *Tweed Shire Council Community Strategic, Operational and Delivery Plans 2017 – 2021*



About us: legacy, context, reach

**Goal 1:
Continue to develop as an
outstanding regional museum
dedicated to the history and
heritage of the Tweed shire**

Legacy

2019 marks fifteen years of operation for Tweed Regional Museum.

The journey began in 2004 with the gift to Council of the collections of three Historical Societies, Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads, and Uki & South Arm, to form a single collection representative of the whole of the Tweed region.

For over more than a decade Tweed Shire Council has invested in major Museum infrastructure, staffing and programs, building one of New South Wales' leading regional museums.

The Tweed Regional Museum embodies the concept of 'one museum, multiple sites' and operates across three branches; Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki, each with a different focus.

Museum buildings, and the collection, combine heritage listed and historically significant built and moveable cultural heritage with diverse exhibitions and public programs.

The Museum's programs are also founded on the principle that collecting stories and artefacts that represent who we are now is as important as caring for our past.

The Museum is emerging from a period of major redevelopment and changes to almost every aspect of operations, including new

and refurbished buildings, rehousing of collections, new exhibition and display programs and new ways of working with key partners.

Since 2013, three new buildings and three major building refurbishments have been completed at Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads, investing more than 3 million dollars in purpose-built museum facilities.



Facilities include a dedicated collection storage facility, and a new contemporary exhibition space at Murwillumbah adjoining the heritage listed 1915 Council Chambers. At Tweed Heads, three heritage listed buildings, including the original Tweed Heads Court House and Boyds' Shed, showcase the Shire's built heritage through best practice preservation and contemporary interpretation. A new dedicated research centre adjoining the Court House was opened in 2017.

These buildings provide an excellent base from which the Museum continues to care for the collection, present programs and reach new audiences.

The entire Museum collection of more than 30,000 items was rehoused in purpose-built storage and display facilities over the five years 2013 - 2017. A new dedicated collections management system was implemented and in 2019 almost 80% of collection items are digitally documented. 100% are recorded in the collection management database. In the five years to December 2018, 4278 new items were added to the Museum collection, and 3884 items which did not meet the collection policy were de-accessioned.

Since 2015, at the Murwillumbah branch of the Museum alone, fourteen major temporary exhibitions, and twenty-three feature displays have been curated and presented. The majority of these use the Museum's own collection and are based on new curatorial research. Many of these exhibitions and displays also incorporate newly commissioned content such as documentary film, high quality photography, and oral history. The display program showcases the Museum collection, profiles community collections, and focusses strongly on contemporary stories.

As well as the contributions of Historical Societies, Friends of the Museum and Advisory Committee Members, our strong volunteer base now also includes front of house volunteers at Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads.

We will continue to pursue opportunities to develop and promote the profile of the Tweed Regional Museum as one of the leading regional museums in NSW. We will continue to care for the suite of heritage listed and new buildings which make up the Tweed Regional Museum, and explore ways to bring greater understanding and appreciation of their cultural value. We will continue to pursue opportunities to enhance the amenity of all Museum buildings to ensure they meet visitor needs, are fit for purpose and cared for according to best practice heritage and venue management principles.



Context . . .

Goal 2: Grow and broaden audiences

Governance

The Community Strategic Plan (2017 - 2027) provides the basis for Council's Integrated Planning suite of documents, identifying the community's main priorities and aspirations for its future, along with key directions.

Museum staff work closely with the Museum Advisory Committee, which provides advice to Council about governance of the Museum and the Shire's collection; with Historical Society partners who provide support for public research enquiries and for collection development and display, and with Friends of the Tweed Regional Museum who provide support through advocacy and fundraising.

The Museum's operational costs are met by Council. One-off project grants, donations and fundraising support key collection and program development initiatives.

The Museum operates alongside other Council cultural facilities such as the Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, Gallery Downtown, and the Tweed Shire Library network.

Tweed Regional Museum contributes to one of the four major service streams identified in Council's Community Strategic Plan (2017 - 2027):

- *People Places and Moving around: who we are and how we live*

Specifically, the Museum represents part of Council's commitment to:

- *Provide places, spaces and facilities for the sporting, recreational, leisure and cultural pursuits of locals and visitors (Places: 3.2)*

In addition, a number of other Council Policies and plans, current and forthcoming provide context for aspects of the Museum's collections and programs. These include:

- Tweed Shire Council Cultural Plan 2018 - 2021
- Aboriginal Statement of Commitment
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 - 2020

A range of Museum-specific Policies and Procedures adopted by Council provide the governance framework for management of the Museum collection, namely:

- Tweed Regional Museum Collection Policy
- Tweed Regional Museum Deductible Gift Recipient Policy and associated Procedure
- Code of Ethics for Museums, International Council of Museums, 2002
- Moveable Heritage Principles, New South Wales Heritage Office & NSW Ministry for the Arts, 2002

In 2018, as part of reviewing the Museum's previous Strategic Plan, discussions and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was undertaken with Council colleagues and members of the Museum Advisory Committee. Common issues identified through this review process which have informed this Strategic Plan are outlined in Appendix 1.

Reach . . .

Who lives in the Tweed? Who visits the Tweed? Who visits the Tweed Regional Museum in person, and who engages with our collections and stories on the line?

Who lives in the Tweed?

The Tweed Shire's population for 2015 was 92,460 and is forecast to grow to 125,953 by 2036.¹

1. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006 and 2011 (<http://economy.id.com.au/tweed/indicators>)

In 2016, approximately 6600 of the Tweed's usual resident population identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Between 2011 and 2036, the age structure forecasts for the Tweed indicate a 50% increase in population under working age (15 years), a 44% increase in population of retirement age, and a 35% increase in population of working age.

The three largest ancestries (other than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) in the Tweed Shire were English, Australian and Irish.

In 2016 13,353 people who were living in Tweed Shire were born overseas, and 10% arrived in Australia within 5 years prior to 2016.

Approximately 47% of visitors across the Museum's Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads branches are locals.

Our visitor surveys indicate that people living in the area look to the Museum to find out about where they live, to seek information and stories, and are interested in activities to share with family, friends and visitors.

Who visits the Tweed?

According to tourism industry figures, the largest percentage of the more than 8.5 million visitors to the Tweed during the 5 years (2012/12 - 2016/17) were Domestic Day trippers (approx. 64%), followed by Domestic overnight visitors (34%) and International Visitors (approx. 1.5%).²

Approximately 55% of those visitors to Tweed Regional Museum who were surveyed are resident in Australia, but live outside the Tweed. Most Museum visitors were staying in the Tweed for 4-7 nights or longer.

There is a significant potential over the next two years to better understand and promote the distinct nature of Museum branches at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah, in particular, their appeal to visitors, and to grow the Museum's capacity to present

information and stories about the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Tweed.

Who visits the Museum and what do we know about them?

In the four and a half years to December 2018, the Tweed Regional Museum welcomed more than 39,600 visitors to all three branches. The numbers of visitors to each Museum site is shaped by various factors.

The Murwillumbah branch is the most visited. It is also the most visible and houses the bulk of permanent and changing displays.

The Tweed Heads branch is a precinct of three separate heritage listed buildings, located within a public park. The interpretation of these buildings is the primary focus of displays. Research and community history related activities are the focus of the Uki branch.

Museum visitation increased more than 50% in 2015, (the first full year of operation at all sites following closures in 2012 for major building and refurbishment works) compared to those for the previous full year of operation, 2011.

Museum visitor numbers peaked in 2017 (just over 11,000 physical visitors) due largely to the Museum's focus on public programs during that year. However this level of programming could not be sustained, and numbers fell back in 2018 to just over 10,000.

In 2018, more than 74% of visitors surveyed at Tweed Regional Museum Murwillumbah were visiting for the first time. This percentage of first time visitors has remained consistently high since the first survey conducted in 2014, and was at its highest in 2018. It is significantly higher than industry benchmarks.

Word of mouth is nominated by visitors as the primary source of information about the Museum, with tourist information and 'signs or banners' the other main sources nominated. 70% of visitors surveyed in 2018 selected 'to connect with local history' as their primary reason for visiting the Museum.

Satisfaction levels among visitors has remained consistently high across all visitor surveys, and is mirrored in unsolicited visitor comments left at Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads branches. Over 95% of visitors rated their overall experience as good or terrific across all visitor surveys, reaching a high of 100% in 2018.

The Museum faces challenges relating to visibility (signage and location) and profile (promotion and cross-promotion among Council cultural facilities), and from a limited capacity to offer a full range of exhibitions and display programs across multiple sites. However, once local residents and visitors find their way to us, they are very positive about the experience and there is significant potential to grow our audience diversity and reach.

Who engages with us online?

The Museum's online profile and reach, particularly through social media, has engaged significant new audiences. At the end of December 2018 the Museum Facebook page had more than 1400 followers, and our Instagram following is growing steadily.

The Museum's collection and display programs are well suited to presentation on digital platforms, via the web and social media.

We will continue to pursue opportunities to promote Tweed Regional Museum branches and their value to the community and to visitors to the Shire. We will continue to work with Council and industry colleagues to ensure the Museum branches and our programs are visible, and to grow awareness and engagement with diverse physical and online audiences. We will continue to explore opportunities to develop public and education programs that address audience needs.

What we do

Goal 3: Develop a significant, sustainable and accessible collection.

Collection development, care and access

The Museum collection is cared for using best-practice industry standards, in a dedicated storage facility and while on display. The collection is managed through a dedicated Collection Management System (Vernon CMS).

80% of collection items are digitally documented. 100% are recorded in the CMS bringing together individual object records and an extensive research archive. More than 5500 collection records are available online.

A significant amount of staff and infrastructure resources are dedicated to collection care. Documentation involves extensive primary research, cataloguing, and photography/scanning. Preventive conservation practices, as well as professional contract conservation services, are routinely employed.

Rigorous best practice processes driven by the Tweed Regional Museum Collection Policy, and overseen by the Tweed Regional Museum Advisory Committee, are implemented for all acquisition, de-accession and related activities.

Ongoing care and development of the collection, together with projects that enable greater access, are the essential foundations upon which all museums rely. These activities consume a significant proportion of Tweed Regional Museum resources and will continue to do so into the future.

We will continue to acquire items of significance, and to review collection holdings in accordance with the Tweed Regional Museum Collection Policy. We will pursue digital documentation and cataloguing of collection material to protect provenance and maintain accessibility. We will continue to devote resources required to consolidate collection and research records within the Collection Management System to ensure future preservation and accessibility. We will pursue new initiatives which enhance access to collection records including online through the Museum's website.



Exhibitions and programs

Goal 4: Present diverse and innovative programs about people, places and events that reflect and shape life in the Tweed.

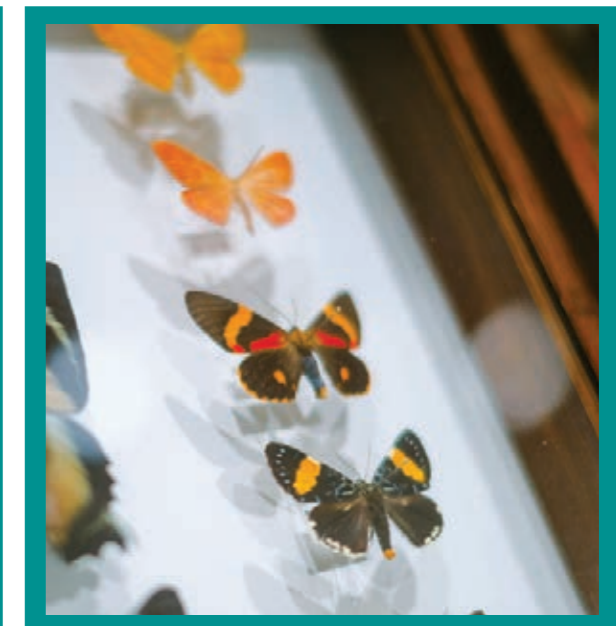
Stories about people, places and events are captured in the Museum's extensive collection of objects, documents, photographs and archival material. We continue to collect to ensure the continuity of these stories, and the addition of new perspectives and experiences.

Our collection, augmented by significant loans from sister organisations and from state and national institutions, forms the basis of exhibition and display programs.

Constraints of space and resources limit our ability to offer touring exhibitions and these will continue to be rare in the Museum's program for the foreseeable future. Self-generated exhibitions requiring original in-house research, design and interpretation will continue to be the basis of the Museum's exhibitions and displays.

Public and education programs associated with Museum exhibitions and the collection are effective and popular means of bringing audiences to the Museum. Curriculum-based education programs for schools are a proven avenue for engaging young people. To date the Museum has had limited reach in each of these important program areas due primarily to the absence of staff resources necessary to address the specialist needs of these program areas.

We will continue to present a program of outstanding temporary exhibitions curated in-house and based on the Museum collection. We will engage community collectors through initiatives such as the Collector's Cabinet. We will develop new permanent exhibitions that expand the Museum's representation of cultural and natural heritage and we will pursue opportunities to develop our capacity to present public and education programs.



How we work

**Goal 5:
Explore opportunities to work with Council, community, and industry colleagues and organisations on collaborative projects that extend the breadth of our programs, and our capacity.**

We collaborate

Over the last five years, the Museum has worked to develop a collaborative approach to collection and exhibition development and public programs, fostering relationships with colleagues across Council and with a range of community organisations.

The Museum is committed to a collaborative ethos that cross-promotes the venues, resources and programs of each participant and which is transparent, mutually acknowledged, and beneficial.

We will explore and extend this collaborative approach to programming through continuing and new relationships for major new projects and for collection and display development.

Goals and key strategies

GOAL 1: Develop an outstanding regional museum dedicated to the history and heritage of the Tweed Shire

	Key Strategies	Time
1.1	Analyse and plan to improve the Museum's infrastructure and operations (visibility, access, maintenance, sustainability).	2019/2020 and 2020/2021.
1.2	Maintain and develop stakeholder and volunteer base (Historical Societies, Friends of the Museum, Front of House volunteers).	Museum Service Agreements 2019, 2020 and 2021. Front of House volunteer recruitment 2019.
1.3	Grow awareness and appreciation of Museum operations and programs at local, regional, state and national level (committees, panels, conferences, project participation, and promotion).	Ongoing 2019/2020, 2020/2021.



GOAL 2: Grow and broaden audiences

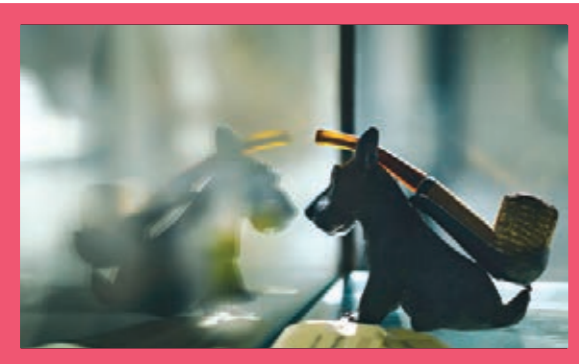
Key Strategies		Time
2.1	Develop and promote a Museum brand supporting greater recognition and engagement with the Museum’s unique collection and programs.	Completed 2019, Implemented 2020.
2.2	Create strategic marketing campaigns targeting identified audience segments to grow awareness and participation.	Ongoing 2019/2020, 2020/2021.
2.3	Improve audience access to Museum collection and exhibition programs through web and social media development and integration.	New website mid 2020. Social media ongoing 2019/2020, 2020/2021.
2.4	Evaluate selected programs to better understand and address audience participation and engagement.	One program in 2019, one program in 2020/2021.
2.5	Survey and analyse demographics and the experiences of physical visitors, program participants and on-line audiences.	Visitor Surveys in late 2019 and late 2020. Online audience analysis monthly and ongoing.

GOAL 3: Develop a significant, sustainable and accessible collection.

Key Strategies		Time
3.1	Develop the collection through targeted research and acquisition.	Acquisitions presented to the Museum Advisory Committee (MAC) at least quarterly.
3.2	Manage the collection sustainably through de-accessioning of items of low significance, and through implementation of preventive conservation practices.	De-accession presented to MAC at least quarterly. Preventive maintenance plan reviewed annually.
3.3	Best practice collection management through appropriate storage and display, and consolidation of collection research and documentation within the Collection Management System (CMS).	Quarterly updates following MAC endorsement of acquisitions and de-accession. Ongoing consolidation of research material.
3.4	Enable greater access to collection through Museum website and other platforms	Exhibition and display material archived to website. Weekly publication of collection material on Facebook and Instagram. CMS integrated to website by end 2020.

GOAL 4: Present diverse and innovative programs about people, places and events that reflect and shape life in the Tweed.

Key Strategies		Time
4.1	Deliver outstanding in-house exhibitions based on the Museum collection.	Exhibitions incorporated in annual program plan.
4.2	Present displays showcasing community collections/collectors and new acquisitions.	Displays incorporated in annual program plan.
4.3	Develop permanent exhibitions that expand understanding and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage.	Natural heritage and review of existing permanent displays 2019/20.
4.4	Take Museum collection and programs into the community through targeted projects.	Annual selection of projects incorporated in program.
4.5	Deliver public programs that grow engagement with the Museum collection, exhibitions and display programs.	Develop 2019, ongoing 2019 - 2021.



GOAL 5: Explore opportunities to work with Council, community, and industry colleagues and organisations on collaborative projects that extend the breadth of our programs, and our capacity.

Key Strategies		Time
5.1	Work with Council colleagues and cultural facilities to develop, deliver and support programs.	Incorporated in annual program as opportunities arise.
5.2	Work with community organisations on projects that grow the collection and enhance the Museum's programs.	Incorporated in annual programs as opportunities arise.





Bath duck lost in the 2017 floods, found in a cane field after fire. Tweed Regional Museum Flood Collection, 2017.

Appendix 1

Internal SWOT analysis

During 2018 members of the Museum Advisory Committee, and Tweed Shire Council staff representing areas of Council with existing or anticipated collaborative relationships³ with the Museum, participated in SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. These discussions reflected on the period covered by the previous Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017.

Common issues to emerge from discussions with Advisory Committee members and Council colleagues included:

Strengths

Quality programs and displays - 'go to place', 'one of a kind'; Core collections - richness and management; Quality of staff - capacity, collaborations and partnerships.

Weaknesses

Visibility, profile - 'not seen as a destination', 'not easy to find'; Understaffed (including in relation to research capacity of volunteers) and underfunded; Lack of cooperation/ complementary activity with Gallery.

Opportunities

Education and public programs potential; New partnerships, collaborations (Tweed Shire Council internal, and external - Universities, libraries); Expanding audiences (population growth, greater potential reach - residents and visitors); Technology-based opportunities (beyond the walls, apps, social media, interactive installations).

Threats

Resources, capacity to deliver; Perception and understanding of a 'museum', relevance; Partnership, relationship constraints.

3. Cultural Planning, Community Development; Natural Resource Management, Recreation Services; Strategic Planning and Urban Design (Heritage), Economic Development, and Communication and Engagement

Images: Collections and displays at Tweed Regional Museum