

POLICY:	BMEC PROGRAMMING POLICY 2016 - 2021
DATE ADOPTED:	6 April 2016
ORIGINAL ADOPTION:	6 April 2016
FILE REFERENCE:	21.00060
OBJECTIVE:	Provide guidelines for the programming of activity occurring at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre (BMEC)

Purpose:

- To provide guidelines which inform programming choices made in relation to programs where BMEC has entrepreneurial and curatorial control
- To provide a mechanism for reviewing and prioritising the balance of the various programs and activity managed by the Centre
- To manage commercial hires in a manner which provides the best community outcomes in line with broad commercial and cultural objectives and priorities
- To manage non performing arts activity within the Centre in a way which supports financial viability whilst acknowledging core purposes and functions

Scope:

This policy considers all activity that occurs at BMEC and includes offsite activities which involve the key artistic, technical and other involvement of BMEC staff such as the *Inland Sea of Sound* and *Catapult* festivals

Implementation:

Implementation of the policy will be the responsibility of BMEC staff under the guidance of the Director of Cultural & Community Services and with reference to relevant Council guidelines, policies and strategies.

Particular reference will be made to the Community Strategic Plan 2036, the Delivery Program Actions and the Operating Plan Tasks

Review:

The policy will be reviewed every two years with the first review due in February 2018

BMEC Programming Policy:

Activity currently managed by BMEC includes:

A range of programs curated and entrepreneured by BMEC

- 1) The BMEC Annual Season – incorporating drama, music, dance, circus & physical theatre and theatre for young people and families.
- 2) The BMEC Local Stages Program – dedicated to local performing arts development with federal, state and local funding support
- 3) The Creative Learning Project and associated performances for young people and families – with professional development for teachers and active participation for young people
- 4) Festivals including
 - The Inland Sea of Sound Festival – featuring national, international and regional musicians plus regional food and beverages
 - The Catapult Festival – the national youth circus festival
 - The Bathurst Writers’ and Readers’ Festival – in association with the Sydney Writer’s Festival Live and Local program
- 5) The Aboriginal Performing Arts Program – dedicated to supporting autonomous local Aboriginal arts practice
- 6) The Regional Theatre project – a three year association with the Australian Theatre for Young People and local artists to tell stories of being a young person in the Bathurst region.

Commercial and not for profit hirers of the venue

- 7) Annually recurring local events – including the Bathurst Eisteddfod, dance school end of year concerts and the Carillon Theatrical Society musicals
- 8) Commercial performing arts venue hires – commercial producers hiring the venue
- 9) One off local performing arts hires – events which happen once as opposed to recurring each year
- 10) Local and non-local, non performing arts hires – including social events, trade shows, conferences and wedding receptions

1) BMEC Annual Season Policy

- Artistic quality should be of paramount importance
- To cater for diverse community interests the Season should include approximately fourteen events consisting of:
 - Approximately four works of drama spanning classical theatre, contemporary and Avant Gard theatre, Australian theatre, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre and the best drama from overseas
 - Approximately four musical presentations spanning classical, contemporary, opera, cabaret, world music, a capella / choral, and daylight / morning melodies
 - Approximately two dance / ballet events
 - One to two cabaret events
 - One or two circus & physical theatre events

- Two or three productions for young people and families, where possible with reference to the Creative Learning Project
- Consideration of cultural diversity and accessible arts should be included
- Access to active community engagement and participation associated with the Season, curated locally, should inform programming choices

2) The BMEC Local Stages Program Policy

- Activity should be programmed which: enhances performing arts skill development; supports the creation of original, contemporary, theatre, dance and physical theatre; and connects local performing arts practice regionally, nationally and internationally
- To adequately program local performing arts activity there should be an allocation of seven to eleven weeks of dedicated venue access
- There should be in house commissioning / directing / producing of at least one project per year to maintain an artistic identity and to enhance brand and profile

3) The Creative Learning Project and associated performances for young people and families Policy

- Program two to three works per year within the Annual Season with a focus on associated professional development for teachers, participatory activity for young people and collaboration with CSU, Mitchell Conservatorium and other partners

4) Festivals Policy

- Each Festival should have its own programming policy
- Opportunities for artistic dialogue with attendees, which can develop over a long period of time, should be encouraged.
- Opportunities to showcase performers from the region alongside excellent national and international artists should be an essential element of programming.
- Festival programming should be designed to develop a sense of ownership for the local population and to attract visitors to the region.

5) The Aboriginal Performing Arts Program Policy

- Any work programmed should be selected in consultation and cooperation with the Aboriginal Community, primarily via Aboriginal Elders.
- The aim of programming should be to assist Aboriginal cultural awareness and autonomy and to assist the local Aboriginal community to make productive national and international cultural connections.

6) The Regional Theatre project Policy

- Opportunities to collaborate with leading regional, national and international partners should be fostered as resources permit
- In house commissioning / directing / producing which offers the opportunity to develop a BMEC identity for creation beyond simply presenting existing work should be fostered.
- The employment of local artists should be a prerequisite
- Opportunities should be pursued to engage with the adolescent population of the region, to enhance their skill development and to tell their stories.

With activity which is not curated by BMEC, where BMEC is basically a venue manager, there is less programming control but some programming considerations are still involved

7) Annually recurring local events Policy

These activities currently occupy 17 weeks, or one third of the year (including the annual maintenance period). The inclusion of additional recurring events should not be to the detriment of other important activity within the venue. The programming imperative is to ensure a broad balance of venue use in line with community needs.

8) Commercial performing arts venue hires Policy

- Artistic quality should be of paramount importance so that patrons can trust the venue, even when the artists are not well known to them.
- It is important to analyse commercial hires to encourage a balance of genres and styles of artists. Consideration should be given to encouraging promoters who might be able to fill gaps in styles of work being presented. It should be a policy not to accept two acts that are seen to be identical, e.g. two Elvis tribute shows in one year, unless they can be shown to be dramatically different from each other in some way.
- If a commercial producer wants to present work that is of unknown or dubious quality the hire should not be accepted until BMEC management can be assured the work is of an appropriate artistic standard.

9) One off local performing arts hires Policy

- The aim should be to allocate enough space in the calendar to cope with these. Ongoing advocacy is needed for the provision of a smaller, flexible, less expensive performance space for some of these activities (this space still will not work for school groups etc.)
- One off local work should be programmed, when possible, through the Local Stages program to ensure there is adequate support, to manage access and to provide guidance as required.

10) Local and non-local, non performing arts hires Policy

- This is arguably not core business. Ideally it should only be catered for when it generates a useful profit to subsidise other activity. A manageable number of events of this nature which make a significant profit should not only be encouraged but actively sought and assisted.

General programming considerations

- Ensure that some time is allocated in the calendar for reflection, assessment, planning and evaluation
- Work with the Destination Development Manager and Council's Events Team when and where appropriate
- Collaborate with local arts organisations such as Arts OutWest, CSU Theatre Media Course, CSU School of Teacher Education, Mitchell Conservatorium and others when and where possible to exploit links and synchronicity to maximise possibilities and avoid duplication.