



3

The arts

“The arts have a crucial impact on our economy and are an important catalyst for learning, discovery, and achievement.”

Paul G. Allen
Co-Founder, Microsoft

3.1 History and background

The Samford arts community is unique. It has a large number of artists residing in a beautiful rural setting. Over the years, there have been private businesses in Samford that have sold artworks made locally, usually with other non-local products. Small gallery-type businesses and gift shops have come and gone in the main street. The arts have always been part of Samford, but not in a very visible, or cohesive manner.

Samford has an Arts community in a unique natural setting, close to Brisbane

Strong and enduring links have not been forged in Samford between the visual and performing arts, artists and the community as a whole. This may be achieved by cohesive planning across a number of areas towards the development of a stronger and richer cultural identity for the region.

Many arts workers and collectives in the district do not have the gallery representation, skills or confidence to consider themselves as professional creative industry workers. Many feel disadvantaged by living in a regional area, feel disconnected with the public and seek to promote their work to a wider audience. Although the Samford and surrounding region has to date achieved some wonderful developments in the arts area, many of the individuals and groups who have been working tirelessly to promote creative strengths and enrich the community have been doing so in isolation. There has been a lack of consistency and overall planning for the district as a whole.

3.2 Existing framework

Until now, the cultural identity of the district has been fragmented – with little cross-linking and networking occurring between existing organisations and individuals – communication tends to remain in house for each group and genre, with little broad range and long-term forward planning. Individuals and small groups mostly work independently.

Existing arts organisations in the broader Pine Rivers and Moreton Bay Region include:

- the Pine Rivers Arts Alliance
- the Moreton Bay Arts Council (MBAC)
- the Moreton Bay Regional Council’s (MBRC) arts development team.

There have been substantial frameworks and networks forged with MBRC and the local Pine Rivers Regional Gallery for many years.

The local arts community includes:

- the Samford Arts and Crafts Association (an association of artisans, which formed in 1988, sells a wide range of art and craft products 7 days a week from the Slab Hut in John Scott Park)
- a variety of local visual and performing arts groups who meet and rehearse regularly at venues in the area such as the Samford Farmers Hall, the Samford Community Hall and local churches
- various groups that function independently, such as Upatree Arts from Mt Nebo
- a large number of independent arts practitioners working separately from their homes and studios
- Samford State School and Samford Valley Steiner School, which both have strong arts programs but would benefit from more local support
- @creativesamford – a new group, formed as part of the ViVa Samford Futures process, which already has over 120 practitioners on its Arts Register (see Sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.1)



The Slab Hut in John Scott Park, Main St, Samford



I would love to see a small cultural centre and cinema. There could be Art house movies, documentaries and exhibitions.

3.3 Community aspirations

The following is a summary of ideas local people identified as important for the arts in the area. These ideas came directly from the ViVa community survey.

- the need for a permanent home – arts space, gallery or workshop centre. The community wishes to establish a dedicated art gallery and workshop location and ensure it forms an integral part of the community (model example: Bribie Island Community Arts Centre).
- regular meetings and opportunities for socialising and sharing ideas
- public festivals, sculpture parks and yarn bombing
- planning competitions to foster ‘the arts’
- artisans markets and performance platforms; e.g. re-form the performers cafe
- use vacant and existing outlets and reinvent used spaces, cafes, walls, footpaths, etc.
- establish community touch screens and a website for communication of information – the who, what, when, where and why
- establish a regular public voice for the arts through local papers (already started by @creativesamford)
- create a ‘Samford identity’, based on creativity and the arts
- develop a pilot Arts Trail and Open Studios Program (liaising with the MBAC) with a view to it becoming an ongoing feature for the area
- access more fully the resources and support provided by the MBRC, the MBAC, the Pine Rivers Arts Alliance and ArtsLink (Qld Arts Council).



3.3.1 Developing a vision

By involving the local community and arts practitioners in the community consultation process, the vision is to:

- build the perception of the Samford district and surrounding areas as a ‘centre for the arts’
- provide a platform for local artists to be recognised and be given a profile
- showcase the local arts community using integrated public art in Main/Station Streets and entry threshold at the roundabout, and studio trails (with navigation guides to open studios in the district possibly twice a year)
- publish regular artist profiles in the Village Pump (already started by @creativesamford), leading to a website with artist listings and eventually producing an Almanac guide to the local arts community
- create a continuous thread of local arts through the public realm and shops
- provide a working village precinct for practising artists and artisans from which they are able to retail their wares and conduct workshops and exhibitions. This could culminate with a public gallery, facilitating performance and visual arts.

3.3.2 @creativesamford

@creativesamford emerged from community input during the Samford Futures process, facilitated by ViVa Samford. It was formed to enhance the profile of the arts in Samford and surrounds, to make the arts more visible and accessible for all, with a view to Samford becoming a renowned creative place to visit, do business and live.

The domain name @creativesamford has been registered and anyone with an interest in the arts is welcome to join the group and be part of the Arts Register (see Section 3.4.1).

The group has established an ‘Arts’ page for the fortnightly published local paper, the *Village Pump*. Profiles of artists are published each issue and these will then be posted on a website, which is in the process of being established by

@creativesamford was formed to enhance the profile of the arts in Samford and surrounds and to make the arts more visible and accessible for all.



All genres will benefit from thoughtful development of the arts in our area

volunteers. @creativesamford is about linking creative people with communities and lifting the profile of the arts in the Samford district, establishing events using natural assets to promote public awareness and engaging with the arts through the natural and cultural environment. The idea is to ‘discover Samford’ through the arts by inviting visitors to the district via the concept of the ‘arts in a beautiful natural setting’.

The formation of the group is in direct response to public need identified by consultation and reinforces the issues identified by the MBAC: a need to strengthen connections between the arts and the public, to

improve opportunities for arts workers, to showcase their work in the community and create regional links for artists, studios and collectives.

If we could also do this sustainably and energy-efficiently, we can develop a wonderful reputation as a vibrant, interesting, creative and green community!

3.4 Enhancements to the arts in Samford

The following areas have been targeted by the group @creativesamford, following the model of community consultation and input. The group’s aim is to build communication networks and establish plans.

3.4.1 The Arts Register

The aim of the Arts Register is to provide a point of contact for all artists working in the region and to connect individuals. The Arts Register provides a platform to:

- compile an email/address base for the communication of relevant information, including monthly newsletters and other arts-related communication
- enable those seeking support for projects to find it, by facilitating communication between individual artists or groups
- develop workshops for practising artists to further develop their skills and to provide mentoring opportunities
- develop links between the general community requiring services and artists.

3.4.2 Arts Trails and Open Studios Program

The @creativesamford group has been approached by the MBAC to be part of the concept development stage of a proposed 2014–2016 Open Studios and Arts Trail program for the Samford and surrounding areas, with a view to linking creative places, spaces, cultural venues and workshops.

The aim of this project is to showcase the work of performing and visual artists directly to the public. The opening of their studios to the community will not only promote the work of artists, but will create greater engagement with the arts by the public and send a clear message that the Samford district has a rich arts culture.

The open studios project will promote the work of artists, create greater engagement with the public and send a clear message that the Samford district has a rich arts culture.

It is envisaged that this could become a case study for the MBRC to use for future planning in this area.

3.4.3 Festivals and events

The planning for arts events, workshops and festivals will begin once the artists’ community is established and networks are formally in place to provide a more cohesive approach. Once underway, it is envisioned that an annual or bi-annual arts festival may be held to showcase the region’s diverse creative talents. The Arts Register will also enable members to become involved with local schools and groups to assist with events such as the Samford Show and School Arts Festivals. The Steiner School and Samford State School have already requested assistance and support for events.

3.4.4 Twilight markets

Regular farmers and artisans markets would be an invaluable addition to the area. It is envisioned that artisans would be an integral part of any market proposals for the district. This would provide an outlet for their work and give them further opportunity to communicate and meet with other artists and the local community.

3.4.5 Samford Arts Precinct – Samford Commons

It is desirable that a readily identifiable arts precinct be established in, for example, the old CSIRO buildings in the Samford Parklands (as part of the Samford Commons proposal: see Section 1.5) or other suitable spaces. Ideally, this location would provide for regular markets, working studios and residencies, an arts development precinct, arts/business incubator/generator and gallery space. One idea

suggested was that Samford could possibly be a new location for the Pine Rivers Regional Art Gallery if a re-location to a more tourist-based area was ever proposed.



Festivals and arts events will develop from the building of a strong arts community (puppets: Upatree Arts)



Development of local markets would provide an important support for local artists



Public seating can be practical, functional and beautifully designed



Locally produced, functional, well-designed public art would be an asset to Samford

3.4.6 Other public art

The issue of the general lack of public art in the local area has been raised as a result of the public consultation process and, in response to this, @creativesamford has commenced work on guidelines for what will be an ongoing, multifaceted project requiring careful planning and community consultation.

The @creativesamford planning will need to take into consideration the following when approaching the issue of public art for the local area:

- identification of relevant district and community needs
- information gathering and workshops to identify the target audience
- assessing design quality and ambience
- researching suitable materials
- ensuring local relevance of material and themes and local artists' availability.

The general lack of public art in the local area has been raised as a result of the public consultation process.

A thoughtful process must be undertaken for the development of art from the environment – built or natural. This would need a facilitator and funding. Some possible sites for public art would be the Samford Parklands (including the RSL Avenue of Honour) and the Farmers Hall (including the Sustainability Hub).



Art is an important activity to develop skills and creativity in people of any age

3.4.7 Community benefit

It is well recognised that the development of a strong, vibrant arts community is essential for the health and wellbeing of individuals and our regional community as a whole. Paul G. Allen, Co-Founder, Microsoft said:

“In my own philanthropy and business endeavours, I have seen the critical role that the arts play in stimulating creativity and in developing vital communities ... the arts have a crucial impact on our economy and are an important catalyst for learning, discovery, and achievement in our country.”

Much is to be gained by developing a sense of a local arts identity and arts engagement in the local area.

- The many bed and breakfast establishments in the district could be promoted as places to stay when attending arts events. The district also has farm stays, wineries, a deer farm and sculpture garden, and lavender farm to name a few already established tourism drawcards.
- We can engage our youth and the retired, the unemployed and isolated members of the community in arts events and workshop opportunities, as well as encourage school communities to be supported in staging environmental arts events to facilitate much needed youth participation and education
- Many local businesses and galleries would benefit from the increased visitors interested in the arts in the district.
- Involvement in a creative, artistic community is a foundation of good health for the community and the individual.
- Well-planned and creative public art will enhance the ambience and natural beauty of the district and help to demonstrate that creativity plays a big part in our local community and lives.

Our vision for action

- Promote Samford in the tourist realm as a creative district and focal point for the arts. This would involve the Moreton Bay Regional Council, the Samford Progress and Protection Association, @creativesamford and local businesses.
- Develop an arts plan for Samford and surrounds with input from @creativesamford and other stakeholders to encompass and prioritise all the areas indicated in the public consultation process, with particular emphasis initially on an online presence for Samford and surrounds and public art. The plan would need to be over 5–10 years and would need support and input from Moreton Bay Regional Council, the Samford Progress and Protection Association, the local community and artists. A flexible timeline for development would be drawn up to show the community the implementation stages of the plan.
- Appoint a designer to consult with interested members of the local community, @creativesamford and the Moreton Bay Regional Council to draw up a workable development plan for public art and streetscape in Samford. Suitable artists and projects would then be commissioned to create permanent works of art to link with the overall plan developed above.
- Create a permanent arts precinct using the rejuvenated Samford Parklands buildings (as part of the Samford Commons proposal) to further the community arts work of @creativesamford and to generate interest and involvement in the arts in the local area.

Everyone’s future

Want to get involved or find out more? Visit the website for further resources, links and updated info. www.samfordfutures.org