



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Prepared by Kempsey Shire Council



www.slimdustycentre.com.au

Acknowledgement of Country

Kempsey Shire Council acknowledges the land of the Thunggutti/Dunghutti Nation. We pay respect to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the role of emerging leaders to continue to guide us in the future. We acknowledge the Stolen Generations and the need to change practices to be inclusive.

This land always was and always will be Thunggutti/Dunghutti land.



Yolande Williams

OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

Dear Stakeholders,

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report for the Slim Dusty Centre for the 2024 financial year.

Over the past year, we have continued to establish the Centre as an emerging cultural and entertainment hub for our community while also honouring and preserving the legacy of Slim Dusty. Despite the challenging global economic conditions, we have persevered, adapted and achieved significant milestones.

This report highlights our accomplishments, challenges and future aspirations for the centre. We extend our gratitude to our dedicated staff, patrons and stakeholders whose unwavering support has been instrumental in our success.

Sincerely,

Yolande Williams

Yolande Williams

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1988-

Photo: Akubra Hats on Display, Slim Dusty Museum

Overview

The Slim Dusty Centre, located in Kempsey NSW, is a multifaceted cultural institution dedicated to preserving the legacy of Australian music icon Slim Dusty. The facility encompasses a museum, art gallery, café, venue hire and retail space, attracting visitors from across the country and beyond.



Mission

At the Slim Dusty Centre, we're dedicated to celebrating the enduring legacy of Australian Country Music icon, Slim Dusty, right within the walls of our museum. But our mission goes beyond that; we're crafting an exceptional destination that beckons visitors to the picturesque Macleay Valley Coast, enriching the experiences of both regulars and newcomers alike.

More than just a museum, we're fostering a vibrant cultural hub in partnership with our local community. Our art gallery, retail space and versatile venue hire functions offer a diverse array of experiences for everyone. Whether you're browsing art, perusing the locally produced items in the retail space or hosting your event in our unique venue spaces, the Slim Dusty Centre is here to enhance the fabric of our community and create lasting memories for all who walk through our doors.

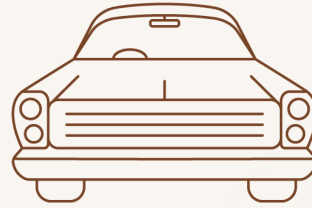
Highlights

1



Award for Visitor Experience:
Received the 2024 Macleay Valley Business Chamber award for Outstanding Visitor Experience.

2



Increased Visitation: Lift in visitation due to increased traffic to the gallery year over year.



3



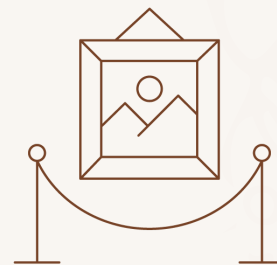
Successful Events: Hosted a variety of successful community events, including youth workshops, gallery exhibition openings and gatherings of various scales.

4



Enhanced Online Presence:
Expanded online reach through social media campaigns, a new e-Newsletter and an improved website.

5



Regional Gallery Status: Achieved Regional Gallery Status, which will support the Centre in its continued pursuit of excellence in arts and culture.



Photo: Handwritten Lyrics on Display, Slim Dusty Museum



Value of Service

Slim Dusty's role in Australian country music history is significant, and his authentic ties to Kempsey have established our region as a key destination for his followers and more broadly, fans of country music. Visitors travel from near and far to learn more about Slim and immerse themselves in the collection of artefacts from his life on display in the Slim Dusty Centre's museum.

Over the years, the Slim Dusty Centre has evolved and become so much more than a museum dedicated to a local legend. Its diverse events, exhibitions and programs enrich the local community and offer learning opportunities for all ages, helping to preserve local history and culture for future generations.

As an emerging community hub, the Slim Dusty Centre hosts events and activities that foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging. It serves as an essential educational resource for young people, offering workshops, school programs and interactive exhibits that inspire future artists and musicians. This focus on education enriches lives and ensures the continuity of cultural appreciation within our community.

As a key arts and cultural tourism attraction, the Slim Dusty Centre aligns with Kempsey Shire Council's strategic goals of providing memorable visitor experiences and quality education. Supporting the Centre ensures it continues to meet community needs, bolster the local economy and enhance the quality of life in Kempsey.



Photo: Steve Waugh Exhibition, Nulla Nulla Regional Art Gallery

Strategic Alignment

1

Kempsey Shire Council Delivery Program & Operational Plan: The Centre boosts the local economy by attracting visitation. Operational improvements, including the addition of shade sails, solar panels, EV chargers and reconfigured spaces will maximise utilisation and performance. The Centre also fosters community partnerships and supports employment capacity.

*

Community Satisfaction Report - Micromex Survey (March 2023): 46% of the Kempsey Shire community believes Council should maintain the same level of support for Arts/Cultural Development in the shire. 31% would like to see more support and 23% would like to see less support.



2

Community Strategic Plan 2022 - Your Future 2042: Our strong local economy offers diverse jobs and vibrant tourism. We celebrate diversity and creativity through community-led cultural initiatives. Council manages assets to meet community needs, enhancing public spaces and quality of life.

3

Community Infrastructure Plan: The Centre meets community needs for more arts and cultural facilities and business and community meeting spaces. It offers a multipurpose venue accessible to all ages and abilities, especially those with disabilities or limited mobility.

4

Destination Management Plan: The Slim Dusty Centre enhances economic and employment capacity by partnering with local businesses and the community, while its cultural and tourism attractions support the destination marketing program outlined in the Destination Management Plan (DMP).

5

Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Horizon 2030: Enhancing economic and employment capacity through collaboration with local businesses and the community. It supports the region's destination marketing through the provision of Visitor Information Services and by generating significant economic activity in the region.

6

Our Creative Macleay - Arts and Culture Plan: The Centre celebrates local heritage and engages the community and visitors through rotating art exhibitions and creative workshops. The facility successfully promotes cultural tourism while strengthening partnerships with other local businesses and cultural institutions.

7

Disability Inclusion Action Plan: To ensure accessibility and inclusivity in facilities and programs for all, the Centre provides adaptations for visitors with disabilities, including accessible exhibition spaces and assistive technologies. Additionally, the Centre offers inclusive community events and educational programs, fostering a welcoming environment for everyone.

By the Numbers



+ 151% gallery visitation

3 major community events



37 venue hire bookings

\$ 151,841 spent on museum tickets




77 workshop participants



22 group tours



21,934 people said *G'day*



2.77mil social media impressions

\$ 81,171 in retail purchases



2023 -2024 Financial Performance

Income Item	Result	Expenditure Item	Result
Museum	151,841	Staffing	(405,698)
Cafe, Catering & Venue Hire	113,958	Cost of Goods for Sale	(75,488)
Retail	81,171	Maintenance	(84,888)
Other	24,526	Utilities	(25,869)
		Licence Agreement	(49,229)
		Art Gallery Events & Exhibitions	(26,511)
		Internal Overheads	(88,217)
		Other Expenses	(65,711)
		Net Result	(450,115)

Figures exclude GST, Grants and Depreciation

Financial Summary

The Slim Dusty Centre offers a range of services to the local community, effectively offsetting expenditures in arts and culture. As the brick-and-mortar hub for visitor information in the region, the Centre also provides a valuable service to visitors. By integrating these valuable services under one roof, the Slim Dusty Centre maximises the impact of investment and enhances the community's cultural landscape.

Despite operating at a net cost, the Slim Dusty Centre remains a cost-effective cultural facility when compared with other regional establishments that serve similar functions for their respective communities.

By investing in the Slim Dusty Centre, Council not only supports arts and culture but also enhances visitor services, reducing the need for separate expenditures in these areas. The centre aligns with Council goals by offering educational and cultural enrichment, promoting tourism and serving as a central hub for community engagement and events. This multi-purpose facility underscores Council's commitment to efficiently delivering diverse services that enrich the community while optimising resources.



Photo: Slim Dusty Merchandise, Slim Dusty Retail Shop

Visitation



Type	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Gallery	1119	2975	7628
Museum (Individuals)	4093	8719	8569
School Tour Guests	20	90	354
Tour Guests	105	816	618
Venue Hire	1045	3024*	2102
Totals	6382	15624	19271

All visitors counted once, *excludes 3,000 attendees at Christmas markets. Does not include Visitor Information. One-half of the main entry door count total for 2023-2024 was 21,934



Photo: JADA Exhibition Opening Event, Nulla Nulla Regional Gallery



Photo: Patrons, Nulla Nulla Regional Gallery

Gallery Highlights



Steve Waugh: Spirit of Cricket India

Captured by cricket legend Steve Waugh in diverse locations across India this photographic exhibition showcases the raw emotion and splendour of India's connection to sport. The exhibition offered a unique opportunity for sports enthusiasts and the wider community to connect with the history and spirit of cricket through personal memorabilia and interactive displays.

Simon Marks: Up the Macleay

Simon Marks' exhibition provided an insightful look into the local environment and community through the artist's lens. "Up the Macleay" featured a range of artworks reflecting the natural beauty and cultural essence of the Macleay region. This exhibition enriched the gallery's collection with local artistic expressions and engaged community members through a familiar and relatable subject matter.



JADA

The Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award is a prestigious event in the art world, known for its high-calibre drawings from established and emerging artists. The touring exhibition brought high-quality, thought-provoking art to the Nulla Nulla Regional Gallery, enhancing its reputation as a venue for significant artistic events and providing local audiences with access to nationally acclaimed works.



Small informational text block, likely a title or description of the artwork.

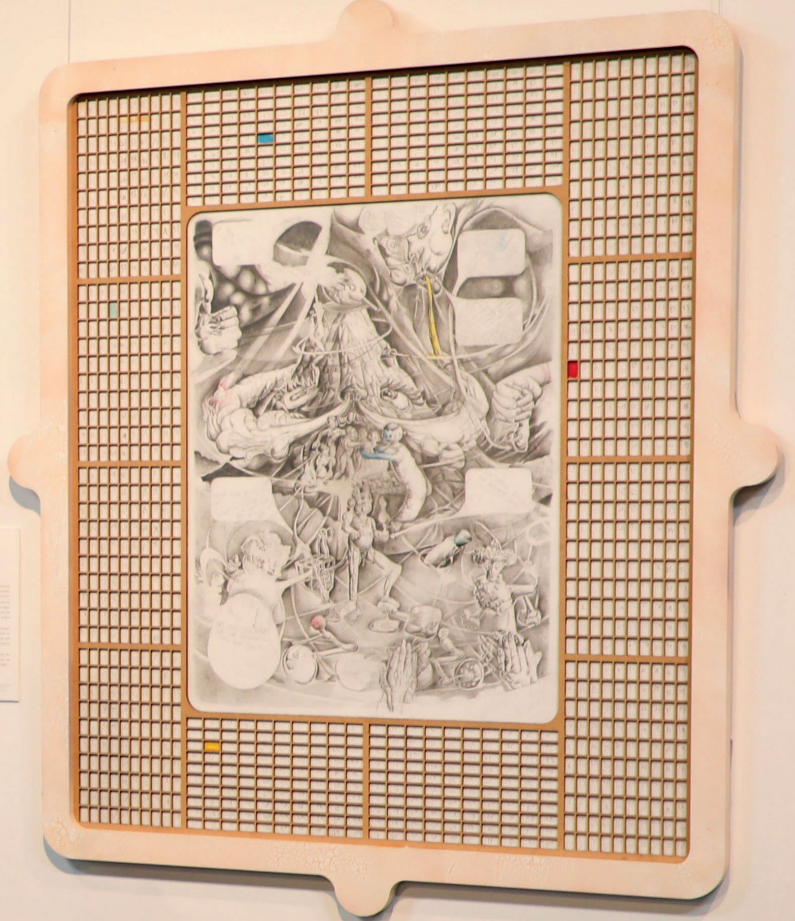


Photo: JADA Exhibition, Nulla Nulla Regional Gallery



Marketing & PR

Over the past year, alongside the enhancements made to the facility, the Centre has also intensified its efforts in marketing and public relations. A comprehensive marketing plan is currently under development, with several key initiatives already underway.



Digital

The old Slim Dusty Centre website was difficult to navigate, visually unappealing and plagued with outdated content and technical issues, leading to low traffic and brief visits. To address these shortfalls, a new website has been launched to enhance user experience with engaging, easy-to-find information, aimed at increasing visits and visitor satisfaction. The Slim Dusty Centre has also launched a new e-Newsletter!

Content

As part of Tourism Australia's National Experience Content Initiative, the Slim Dusty Centre acquired new imagery and videos at no cost. These new visuals, featuring both the event facilities and the exterior, will enhance our promotional materials.



Strategy

We work to raise awareness and grow our reputation by using data-driven strategies to communicate our unique offerings such as the Nulla Nulla Regional Gallery and versatile and evolving venue hire capabilities.

Digital Marketing Results



6,800
total users

Website

00:01:08
average engagement
time



3.8
page views
per visit

e-Newsletter

open rate
^ 21.1% vs.
peer average



click rate
^ 4.2% vs.
peer average



audience: 1,199

Social Media



46,686
Followers



- 1 Sydney
- 2 Melbourne
- 3 Brisbane



1.87mil
Daily Reach



52.8%



47.2%



26
Clicks to
Website



2.77mil
impressions



Community Programming

Workshops

The Slim Dusty Centre engages with the local community through various outreach programs and collaborative initiatives. In the past year, the Centre has developed educational resources and workshops with local schools and community groups, including the Blak Douglas Art & Sole Student Workshop with 23 students and several Children's Summer Holiday Break Workshops. These efforts highlight the Centre's commitment to accessible and enriching educational experiences.

Events

In the past year, the Slim Dusty Centre has hosted significant community events, such as the NAIDOC Ball, the Glitz & Glamour Ball and the Australia Day Citizenship and Awards Ceremony in January 2024.

Additionally, the Centre hosts markets, charity fundraisers and special events for seniors, veterans, residents and disadvantaged groups, fostering community spirit and inclusivity.



Venue Hire

The Slim Dusty Centre is a premier function centre in the Macleay, offering versatile venue hire options, including the spacious Mates Room, which can accommodate up to 120 seated or 200 theatre-style guests. Equipped with a PA system and short-throw projector, the Mates Room is ideal for corporate meetings and events. Accessibility is a priority, with features like accessible parking bays, flat and level ground, available wheelchairs and walkers, wide doorways with colour-contrasting frames, adequate lighting, drinking water and shade for guide dogs, display cabinets at varying heights, clearly marked accessible emergency exits and unisex accessible toilets. Catering options for events include packages featuring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, with all-day tea and coffee service.

In 2023-2024, the Slim Dusty Centre hosted a variety of significant events, drawing large numbers of attendees. Highlights included the NAIDOC Gala Ball with 217 attendees, the Glitz & Glamour Ball with 220 attendees and the Australia Day Citizenship & Awards Ceremony with 320 attendees. The Centre also facilitated numerous workshops, training sessions and meetings, such as the Big Map Disaster and Recovery Event and community-focused gatherings like the Durri Aboriginal Medical Services Staff Development Day. This diverse range of events showcases the Centre's ability to accommodate and support the needs of various organisations and community groups.



Photo: Outside the Slim Dusty Centre



Photo: Retail Shop at the Slim Dusty Centre

Retail

The Slim Dusty Centre's retail shop provides a range of merchandise celebrating the legacy of Slim Dusty and Australian country music. Visitors can browse through an extensive selection of Slim Dusty memorabilia, including CDs, DVDs, books and hard-to-find merchandise such as clothing, hats and accessories adorned with Slim Dusty branding.

The shop also features unique gifts and souvenirs that reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Macleay Valley Coast, including handcrafted items from local artisans.

The Slim Dusty Centre's retail space has seen significant growth and development during the past year, particularly through the introduction of new branded products. Expanding the range to include 'The Slim Dusty Centre' branded merchandise has not only enhanced the visitor experience but also boosted revenue. The addition of exclusive clothing and accessories featuring the Centre's logo has been particularly popular, appealing to both local visitors and tourists seeking unique souvenirs.

Visitor Information Services

Visitor information outlets provide essential guidance, enhancing the overall experience by offering maps, brochures and local insights. They play a crucial role in boosting tourism by helping visitors discover attractions, accommodations and services in the area.



A Guiding Light

Housing a Visitor Information Outlet inside the Slim Dusty Centre has been highly valuable, offering guests convenient access to essential local information and enhancing their overall experience. The knowledgeable and friendly staff at the Centre play a crucial role in this, providing personalised advice and recommendations to visitors. They assist with itinerary planning, suggest must-see attractions and offer insights into local events and activities. This personalised service helps visitors make the most of their time on the Macleay Valley Coast, fostering a positive and memorable experience. Additionally, the staff's expertise encourages guests to explore more of the region, promoting better dispersal of visitation in line with Council's Destination Management Plan.

Outlook



The Future is Bright

We're absolutely buzzing about the future at the Slim Dusty Centre! We're excited to introduce new spaces for hire, including a creative Art Lab, making our venue even more versatile and inviting. These fresh areas will be perfect for everything from grand celebrations to cosy gatherings, all while maintaining the warm, welcoming atmosphere you've come to love.

We're also expanding our gallery program to feature more incredible exhibitions that celebrate the unique connections between Australian music and art. We're keen to explore new ways to engage with both locals and visitors, ensuring that everyone feels connected to the Centre's vibrant community. Ultimately, we aim to create a space that not only continues to inspire and delight but also grows alongside the ever-evolving interests of our visitors.



Photo: 'Nulla' the Koala, Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported the Slim Dusty Centre throughout the year. Our deepest thanks go to our dedicated staff, whose hard work and passion bring the Centre's vision to life every day. We also appreciate the unwavering support from our volunteers, whose commitment brings so much love and warmth to our space.

Special thanks to the Slim Dusty Foundation for their partnership, support and collaboration, which have been instrumental in our continued success. We are grateful to the local businesses and community members who have embraced our initiatives and participated in our programs. Finally, a sincere thank you to our visitors and supporters, whose enthusiasm and feedback inspire us to continually strive for excellence. Your support is vital to our mission and greatly valued.

2023 - 2024 Programming Index

Venue Hire

NAIDOC Gala Ball 'Celebration of Elders', 8 July
Big Map Disaster and Recovery Event, 27 & 28 July
Communities & Justice Workshop, 23 August
KSC Citizenship Ceremony, 31 August
Regional Development Australian Meeting, 5 September
KSC Customer Experience Workshop, 5 September
Regional Industry Edu Trainee & Apprentice Drop-in Session, 7 September
KSC Emergency Warden Training, 20 September
Durri Aboriginal Medical Services Staff Development Day, 22 September
KSC Supervising Apprentice Workshop, 26 September
Glitz & Glamour Ball, 14 October
Road Safety Training, 18 October
Senior Leaders Forum KSC, 24 October
KSC Corporate Services Team Meeting, 31 October
KSC Leaders Forum, 7 November
Durri Team Workshops, 14 & 15 November
Catholic Education Workshop, 23 November
Big Map Councillor Briefing, 6 December
Big Map KSC Staff, 18 January
Australia Day Citizenship & Awards Ceremony, 26 January
KSC Leaders Forum, 29 February
KSC Stop Work for Safety, 21 March
Resilience Canopy Project Training, 26 & 27 March
KSC Apprentice Workshop, 23 April
Greg Kenny Solicitors Meeting, 3 May
Home Instead, 6 June
The Federation Co-Op, 7 June
Country Mayors Sundowner Event, 12 June
Country Mayors Conference, 13 & 14 June
KSC Citizenship Ceremony, 20 June
AEW Collaborative Catholic ED, 25 June
KSC Leaders Forum, 27 June
Dementia Australia – Neuro Science, 28 June

Gallery Events

Steve Waugh 'Spirit of Cricket India' Exhibition
Opening Event, 7 September
Simon Mark 'Up the Macleay' Exhibition Opening, 25 November
"Habitat of the Heart" Exhibition Opening, 3 February
Opening 'Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award' (JADA) Touring Exhibition, 13 April

Educational & Other Events

Blak Douglas Art & Sole Student Workshop, 25 August
Slim Dusty's 20th Anniversary (since passing)
Commemoration Exhibit, 19 September
Bowraville Central School Museum & Gallery Tour, 17 October
Youth Summer Holiday Workshops:
'Slim Dusty's Road Trip', 9, 16 & 23 January
'Picasso's Guitar', 10, 17 & 24 January
'Macleay Landscape', 12 & 19 January
'Senior's Week Free Entry for Macleay Residents 12 & 19 March
Homeschool Family Tour, 22 March
Slim Dusty's Birthday Celebration, 13 June
Kempsey Adventist School, Year 7 visit, 13 June

Museum Tours

Port City Probus Tour, 13 July
Lismore Catholic Diocese Tour, 25 July
Toormina Community Transport Tour, 8, 11 & 16 August
Wauchope Senior Citizens Tour, 16 August
Bruce Drysdale Tour, 22 August
Bruce Drysdale Tours, 25 October
Vintage Rail Tours, 25 October
Expanding Horizons Tour, 1 November
Cardwell's Coaches Tour, 1 November
Coastal Variety Tours, 8 November
Expanding Horizons Tour, 9 November
Travelrite International Tour, 22 November
Expanding Horizons Coach Tour, 9 April
Trade Travel Museum Tour, 4 May
St Agnes Parish Museum Tour, 16 May
Rail Express Museum Tour, 25 May
Expanding Horizon Down Under Tours, 4 June
Expanding Horizon O'Shannessy Tours, 5 June
Expanding Horizon Potter Travel Tours, 12 June
Tuncurry Coaches, 26 June