

PART A – Project Submission

1. What is your project?

The Gawler Cultural Heritage Centre is a new cultural organisation which opened in April 2019. The aim of Cultural Heritage Centre is to present exhibitions that highlight the specialized and significant Gawler Heritage Collection and to tell the little-known stories of Gawler, South Australia's oldest country town.

Our project is the exhibition Golden Land: The Story of Food Production in Gawler. The Town of Gawler is located less than one hour's drive from the Adelaide CBD and it is one of the fastest growing regions in South Australia yet many people, visitors and locals alike are unaware of the town's significant history of food production. The exhibition celebrates food and its fundamental role in our lives. From the indigenous Kurna people's resourceful and sustainable food gathering techniques to large scale factories, food production has been central to human existence in Gawler.

The objective of this exhibition was to attract intergenerational audiences to the Cultural Heritage Centre to share their memories of kitchens from their past and to celebrate the role food plays in our lives. It was also an opportunity to celebrate the scale and innovation of historical industries that were once fundamental to the success of the town but are no longer part of the local economy.

2. How does it demonstrate excellence and best practice in heritage interpretation?

This exhibition utilises the principles of personal relatability to enhance the visitor experience. The specific inclusion of a wall of kitchens-four different styles from four different eras was designed to do more than just educate on the equipment found in kitchens past, it allowed visitors to connect with their own memories. We all have experiences of kitchens and in particular the stylistic renditions of kitchens from the fifties and eighties connected with visitors' memories of their grandparents' homes, prompting discussion about how kitchens have changed.

The exhibition also provoked discussion on the role of gender in the preparation of food. The amount of work that was required to prepare meals for families and the rise of supposedly labour-saving devices such as the microwave when women entered the workforce in large numbers in the 1970's.

Research, concept planning and methodology:

The first two exhibitions held at the Heritage Gallery were overviews of the history of Gawler and the region and so with this exhibition we wanted to attract a crowd who do not consider themselves typical consumers of heritage content. This was important in this Covid era as our community was doing it tough and we wanted to be able to provide them with an entertaining and informative free experience that they could enjoy with their family or friends in a Covid Safe manner when so many other leisure activities had been restricted.

The exhibition theme was developed as a collaboration of the Gawler Heritage Collection Committee, Cultural Heritage Centre staff and Centre Volunteers. The interaction of professional staff and community representatives enabled us to flesh out themes and object choices that resonate with our diverse audience. It also enabled us to tap into community memories of the food production industries that were once significant employers in the town.

After a competitive procurement process, Synthetic Creative Services were engaged to design and install the exhibition. They developed a concept design for the exhibition together with the proposed layout utilising the Heritage Gallery and the adjacent entrance spaces to draw visitors to the gallery. Working with Richard Browning we were able to refine themes and finalise object choices mindful of the limitations of the space. The Heritage Gallery is 65m square and has two large permanent showcases. Utilising the available space but maintaining disability access and room for prams/strollers was a key component of the design brief.

The Cultural Heritage Centre is fortunate to have a team of dedicated volunteers including skilled researchers and their dedication and commitment, provided the detailed and referenced research on the identified themes which then informed the development of the interpretation panels. Our target audience was families and key themes included the fact that large scale food and beverage production factories are not new, and Gawler was exporting eggs and butter internationally

in the 1920's, before refrigeration. Other stories presented included the Mills, the Breweries, and the role of the local Agricultural Show in supporting and innovating backyard food production

The exhibition begins with the Kurna people and their forty thousand years of sustainable food production in this region. When originally discussing and planning the exhibition with Kurna community representatives it was intended that this theme would be a larger part of the exhibition. The South Australian Museum had been supportive of the Cultural Heritage Centre borrowing objects from their collection that had originally belonged to the Gawler Heritage Collection and the community were keen to see these items of food production return to Gawler for the exhibition.

Understandably, when the pandemic struck the health and wellbeing of Kurna community members took precedence over the exhibition and so this part of the exhibition was scaled back to what was achievable given the circumstances. It was disappointing but it is the intention of the Cultural Heritage Centre to continue to work with the Kurna community and to bring these objects back to Gawler for a future exhibition.

Engagement

As the exhibition was aimed at families, we utilised several interpretative techniques to attract and enable different learning styles. Synthetic Creative Services constructed a wall of four different kitchens to highlight the differences in equipment and décor from the 1880's, 1920's, 1950's and 1980's. It was an exercise in compare/contrast and enabled intergenerational conversations about what people remember from kitchens of their childhoods and living memory. The kitchens also have objects that can be handled and explored, things that are no longer found in modern kitchens such as wall mounted phones and address books.

One of the key objects from the Gawler Heritage Collection that was to be included in the exhibition was a charity cookbook from 1927 which was a mainstay of many Gawler homes right through to the 1970's. The title of the cookbook is The Modern Athens Cookbook and to try and explain why it is called that and to make a cookbook interesting, Synthetic Creative Services produced a short audio visual, set in the 1950's that was a spoof on cooking shows but also informative and educational. We were fortunate to secure the services of the actress Anna Steen who was able to bring the material alive in a fun and informative manner.

The piece was filmed in an original 1950's kitchen at Carrick Hill and rather than presenting it on a modern screen, Richard Browning utilised a large, old box TV to present the film. This has been a huge talking point with our audiences as they discuss the evolution of the home TV, gender roles in cooking and changes in how food is presented and advertised on television.

Visitors are also able to weigh eggs using a historic egg scale, vote on which decade they think was the healthiest and write their favourite recipe and who cooked it on a decorative recipe card which is then attached to a pinboard.

Implementation

Golden Land: The Story of Food Production in Gawler is a stand-alone project that will run in the Heritage Gallery until early 2022. It has driven programming initiatives including a panel presentation by Adelaide University on research they have undertaken on the viability of modern backyard food production given the size of contemporary house blocks. We have published recipes from the historic cookbook for the community to engage with and are supporting public discussions into the feasibility of a community garden. The exhibition is also the basis of the current education program and guided tours.

The exhibition is included in Gawler Civic Centre Marketing and the Town of Gawler social media and items from the exhibition and snippets of text feature frequently in the Cultural Heritage Centre Instagram and Facebook pages.

Access

The Heritage Gallery has full disability access and whilst the space is not large, it was important that the design of the exhibition did not impact that. This was also important for the corridor leading to the Gallery as it is thoroughfare for other parts of the building. Synthetic Creative Services were mindful of this in the design and ensured that mobility devices and prams/strollers could easily access the

space. Utilising an overhead hanging system in the corridor to draw people in meant that there was a visual enticement, that even smelt good, but access was not impeded.

Information in the exhibition was presented in multiple formats, text panels, film/audio, things to touch and grasses and grains to smell. The multi-sensory format was aimed at providing something for everyone regardless of age or literacy levels

3. Identify the resources needed for your projects (e.g. staff, materials, money). Demonstrate how you used these resources effectively.

Project Costs:

Service	Contractor	Fee
Design Fee	Synthetic Creative Services	\$4000
Props & Technical Equip	Synthetic Creative Services	\$2000
Printing & Installation	Sign by Knight	\$9262
Film Production	Synthetic Creative Services	\$1500
Kitchen sets, display crates, interactives	Winkle Group	\$12,247
Total		\$29,009

The cost of labour for the two Cultural Heritage Centre Staff is founded from Town of Gawler's recurrent budget for Cultural Heritage Centre operations. Centre volunteers and the Gawler Heritage Collection Committee donated more than 250 volunteer hours to the project.

Cost effectiveness

The Town of Gawler considers cultural heritage tourism a key economic driver attracting visitors from across the State and nation (when the borders are open). The Heritage Gallery is a drawcard for tourists and locals, encouraging them into the main street of the town.

The Heritage Gallery welcomed 10,000 visitors in its initial year of operation. Investment in annual exhibitions allows us to continue to grow our audience and to contribute to the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of the town.

Sustainability/ Futureproofing

The Town of Gawler is committed to environmental sustainability where possible and Synthetic Creative Services were able to assist us in this goal by reusing and repurposing current assets. They re skinned existing text panels and plinths, and sourced props from second-hand stores and auctions.

The wall of kitchens was designed as four free standing units that can be easily stripped and reused and reconfigured as four individual units or back to back units. They can also be modified for safe travel should we tour the exhibition. The interactive voting module can easily be repurposed to encompass different questions of themes and the manufactured display crates will have multiple uses in future exhibitions.

Council is committed where possible to include a local benefit of 15% of a project cost to be spent with local suppliers, to promote the local economy and to encourage social inclusion. Synthetic Creative Services were respectful of this and where possible utilised local suppliers to deliver the brief.

4. How has your project met clear and measurable outcomes for your client/organisation and stakeholders?

Outcomes for this project are measured by visitor numbers, feedback recipe cards, the comments book, social media comments, financial donations, and programming attendance.

The exhibition has been open for five months and whilst attracting high visitor numbers is challenging with closed borders, the feedback we are receiving has been very positive. Comments include:

“Loved the exhibition. So great to record our history and share with our children”.

“Brought back lots of memories from my grandmothers time through to the present day”.

“Lived it and loved it!!!”

“Insightful and interesting”.

We monitor and report visitor numbers and comments within the exhibition and on social media monthly. To encourage repeat visitation, we are introducing new hands-on activities for children for the school holidays. We are also refreshing a small section of the exhibition to create a greater emphasis on the local Agricultural Show. The refresh is a considered attempt to support the Gawler Agriculture, Horticulture and Floriculture Society in what has been a difficult year as they have had to postpone the event from September to November. By drawing visitors to the Gallery, we hope to remind them of the importance of the Show to this community, that it will return and that the Gawler Show has a long and proud history.