



Barossa German Language Association Inc.

Barossa Culture Precinct and Study Centre: Concept

Draft for discussion and planning [draft 29/5/24]

**Invitation to public heritage, business and tourism consultation
Monday June 24th at 6.00 pm in the Langmeil Church Centre, Tanunda**

Introduction

This is a proposal for a Culture Precinct and Study Centre in the Barossa, which takes account of the lived environment and heritage in the region. The proposal is designed to maintain cultural heritage and local heritage buildings and sites together with development of community, business and commercial activities. The proposal has been discussed and developed by the Barossa German Language Association Inc.

The Culture Precinct concept maintains heritage, renews cultural practices and establishes for the long term a people's place for sustainable ecology for Barossa communities and citizens, for visitors/tourists, for scholars, for visiting lecturers, for school groups and for tour groups. In particular the Culture Precinct maintains the original functions of buildings and town space for continuity of culture from the past to the present and into the future. The Culture Precinct and Study Centre link Indigenous and German heritage in the local environment. It is planned as a viable, income-generating Centre. The Study Centre is designed for visitors, touring groups, for education visits, for language and history study, for historical research, for public events, for worship and arts events, and for pleasure in the environs and the built environment.

A possible location for the Culture Precinct and Study Centre is in the heart of Tanunda, a town marked with heritage buildings and ongoing cultural life. One possible site of many is Langmeil Lutheran Church together with St Johns Lutheran Church, the Langmeil Museum, the Manse of Langmeil Lutheran Church, the Lutheran School, the Barossa Valley Archives & Historical Trust Inc. Museum, and buildings and infrastructure of properties and associated streetscapes. The central position maintains churches for continuing worship, infrastructure for lectures and talks, multimedia narratives, historical films for displaying German and Indigenous culture in an environment for walking tours around the site. There is space for bus tour operators and for visitor parking.

The context for a Barossa Culture Precinct and Study Centre

The Barossa is famed for food and wine. Its German and indigenous heritage is less well known¹. But German heritage although invisible in advertising the Barossa is evident in viticulture, in architecture of churches, in cemeteries and in museums, and in names of people, places, businesses and streets. And German culture is maintained in Lutheran worship, which has continued since the first worship services were held in 1838. History is shared with Indigenous languages and cultures and is contributing to the revival of Indigenous languages.

When the German Language Documentation, Maintenance and Renewal Program was established in 2012², questions were often asked by visitors about German in the Barossa, about whether it was spoken, about its features and where visitors could find out about it. In the decade since the Barossa German Language Association Inc. was established, we have ascertained a strong community of German speakers, have documented German speakers and have made public the importance of the German language and culture for the Barossa community and across South Australia. The cultural heritage is given token acknowledgement in Barossa tourist information and preserved in museums but without an identifiable and visible cultural narrative.

The Barossa German Language Association's program is active in valuing German heritage and events, in establishing the significance of maintaining culture with language, and in cherishing German language and traditions. The Culture Precinct and Study Centre combines people and places with language, heritage and current social and economic activities. It is planned to generate income for maintenance and renewal of heritage with people's employment as teachers, archivists, guides and scholars.

The idea of the Culture Precinct and Study Centre

The Culture Precinct and Study Centre (CP&SC) brings together, networks and amplifies the strands of German culture past and present, which comprise immigration, history of settlement, Lutheran worship practices, music, education, agriculture, domestic life, viticulture and language. Today it continues in education, in Sunday worship and in people's lives. One concept is to keep the Culture Precinct and Study Centre as community owned and public institution to document, maintain, renew and inform community, visitors and researchers. Its role as a Study Centre is to record and maintain heritage, to educate, to inform, to enrich, to provide worship and to entertain.

¹ German and Indigenous heritage are not marked features in tourist information for visitors to the Barossa. The fascinating histories of the German and Indigenous people and the rich local resources are an attraction for people to stay longer in the Barossa and generate income for researchers, guides and students.

² Mickan, P. 2024 Barossa German: Language documentation, maintenance and renewal in a German-speaking enclave in South Australia In Grohmann, Kleanthes K. (ed.) Multifaceted Multilingualism John Benjamins, pp 415-427

The plan is for the Culture Precinct and Study Centre to develop, administer and promote an active program in a public place for recognition, study, education and maintenance of multifaceted features of heritage and living culture in the Barossa and beyond. It combines functions for residents, visitors and researchers. The Centre is multifunctional with suggestions noted here as part of an agenda for developing the concept further:

1. to learn about the history and trajectory of life in the region, including the study of Indigenous heritage, language and life;
2. to document, display and make accessible to local people, visitors and scholars the record of German-speakers in cultural life, in mission work, in business, in music, in agronomy and viticulture, in social organisations and in life and work in the Barossa;
3. to record and make accessible the lives of descendants of settlers;
4. to support religious heritage in worship, in education and in community services;
5. to record the lives of German speaking settlers who have come to live and work in the Barossa since the second world war;
6. to study settlement by German and Wendish speakers;
7. to learn the German language and teach German to children and adults;
8. to hear, learn and perform music;
9. to attend worship with prayer, song and preaching in German and English;
10. to study gardening, food, viticulture, agriculture and animal husbandry;
11. to advocate for the local ecology, sustainability and heritage;
12. to maintain, research and make public German culture and language documents and artefacts;
13. to provide a current and future focal place for German-speaking people's lives, work, research, histories, businesses and environmental and economic activities.

The Barossa as context for cultural heritage, maintenance, business, tourism & education

The Culture Precinct and Study Centre is conceived as multiple connected sites for the study, research, education and development of German and Indigenous culture in the region. The location of the concept of the GCSC in the Barossa, connects people's lives and traditions with the visible culture in towns, in Lutheran Churches, in cemeteries and in the natural ecology of land use. The idea is to locate the GCSC to keep and maintain and renew local Lutheran Churches and facilities. It would seem in the near future that a few Lutheran congregations will amalgamate, with reduced use of a place of worship and possibly with repurposing of the church buildings. The Study Centre as conceived maintains the original worship use of church buildings as part of the functions of a Cultural Centre, maintained for worship, music study, religious and language education embedded in the lives of locals and visitors.

Community strategy

The concept is for a representative action group to consult, discuss and develop a feasibility plan to negotiate with interested parties, to coordinate project planning, to identify funding, and to initiate submission of a proposal for use of a Church plant as a Study Centre. The task is to bring together

people and organisations with vested interests in German Culture Study. These may at least include the Organ Music Society, the Barossa Cultural Centre, the Barossa German Language Association, the Lutheran Church communities, Tourist Office, Barossa Council, the electorate of Schubert, local businesses, Barossa Historical Society, the Barossa Valley Archives & Historical Trust Inc., the Langmeil Church Museum, plus other local museums, cemetery trusts and worship communities.

The purpose of uniting community action is

1. to develop the concept with functions of Precinct as part of a feasibility study;
2. to build community support for the Centre;
3. to specify the need for the Centre; and to establish the viability of the Centre (cost/benefit analysis);
4. to negotiate a site or sites for the Centre;
5. to combine the efforts of people and the functions of institutions for negotiating, planning and establishing the Centre.

For further information contact us. We invite your participation in the development of the plan. Please send comments, expressions of interest for participation and suggestions to

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