



Narooma School of Arts  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Increased costs force Narooma Arts Centre rethink**

Construction of Narooma Arts and Community Centre (NACC) Project cannot go ahead with existing funds without considerable re-scoping or even a complete redesign.

"That's now obvious following a number of frank meetings with senior Department of Regional NSW staff in Narooma," said Narooma School of Arts (NSoA) spokesperson Bob Aston.

NSoA's challenge is to work out how to build the project within available funds, while still delivering the same community benefits.

"Escalations in construction costs and supply shortages over the last two years have made the original design prohibitively expensive, compared with when NSoA first applied for its \$7.27m Bushfire and Local Economic Recovery Fund Grant over two years ago," Mr Aston said.

"Despite the NSW Government inviting us to apply for additional funds once tender results were known and after subsequent negotiations, the government is not able to provide sufficient additional funds to construct the original design.

"The NSoA committee and the NACC Project Subcommittee feel to de-scope the design to the extent suggested by the Department of Regional NSW's assessment panel would severely compromise the NACC's functionality and viability."

Mr Aston was also critical of the process of applying for additional funding.

The NACC is a community initiative on community-owned land with three multi-use studios/rooms and a large gallery. It will be a centre for creativity and learning with health and wellbeing benefits for the whole region, as well as economic benefits from cultural tourism, training and job opportunities. It would also play a vital role in any future emergencies.

Mr Aston said the community has worked on this project for over 10 years contributing over \$250,000 from its own funds and Value-in-Kind. He noted that under the original schedule, the NACC was to open at the end of June.

Department of Regional NSW staff said they appreciated Narooma's frustrations while stating the government remains committed to this project being delivered.

The Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund project is jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Governments.

#### **CAPTION: Dr Holland's Visit**

*Member for Bega Dr Michael Holland was briefed on the NACC Project in August last year when the NACC Project had just gone to tender. Among those at that briefing were Narooma School of Arts Vice President Bob Aston, Committee member Petti McInnes, left, Dr Michael Holland, and NACC Project Subcommittee members Russell Burke and Rob Hawkins.*