

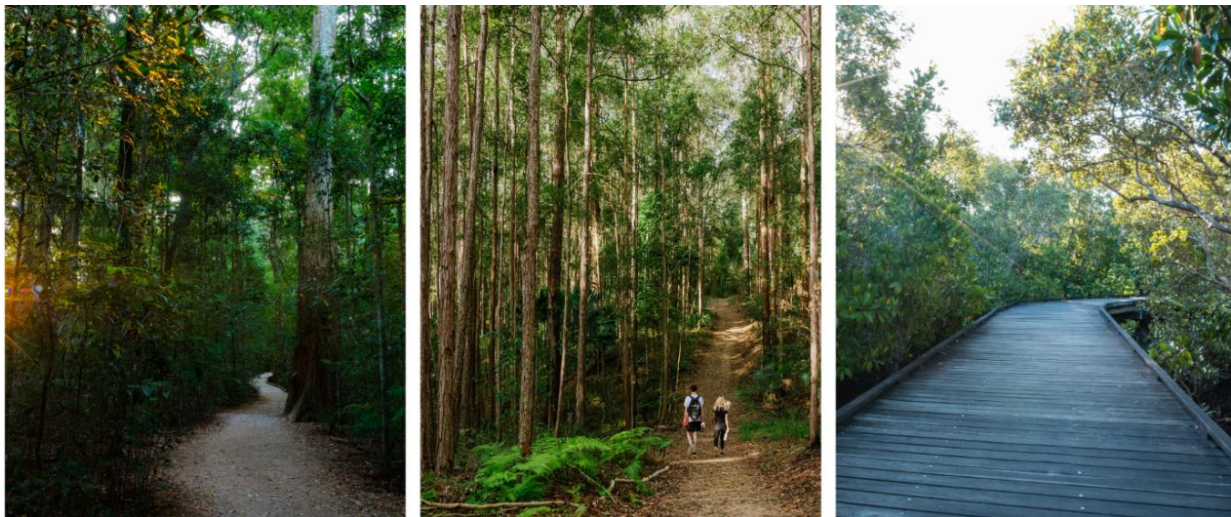
Arts and Ecology Project: Opportunity Overview

Acknowledgement

The Environmental Visitor Centres acknowledge Jinibara and Kabi Kabi / Gubbi Gubbi Traditional Custodians of the lands on which the Centres are situated. The historic and ongoing connections to and knowledge of the land, waters, skies and ecology of these places is long-held and deeply valued. We recognise all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first natural historians, scientists, and artists; who continue to express understandings of identity, landscape, biodiversity, seasonal change and inter-species relationships through rich cultural practices.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in contributing to Environmental Visitor Centres (EVC) programming through your arts practice and project. This document aims to give you an understanding of each of EVC and the unique values and facilities available. It also details opportunities for creative exhibitions and residencies through public programming. Once you have read it, please use the Arts and Ecology Project Proposal form to introduce yourself, describe your idea with reference to the assessment criteria and submit for consideration.



Left to right: Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve walking track, Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Garden upland bushwalk, Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary mangrove forest boardwalk.

The Sunshine Coast Council's EVC are:

- [Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve](#) (Maleny, Jinibara Country)
- [Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Garden](#) (Tanawha, Kabi Kabi Country), and
- [Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary](#) (Bli Bli, Kabi Kabi Country).

The EVC exist within a network of environmental reserves that the Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) manages; each with distinct plant and animal communities, providing important ecosystem services to the surrounding landscapes. The EVC are unique within this network, in that they are accessible to the public and enjoyed by the community for wellbeing, learning, sense of identity and recreation. This makes them inimitable sites for public-facing creative projects at the intersection of the arts and ecology on the Sunshine Coast.

Below you will find information on why these opportunities exist, what an Arts and Ecology Project is, who can apply, what is offered to and what is required, residency information, proposal assessment criteria and a detailed introduction to each of the EVC sites (pages 6 – 9).

Please consider this information with your proposed project in mind.

Why Arts and Ecology?

Arts and Ecology Projects held at the EVC are underpinned by the intersection of several SCC strategic policies.

The Environment and Liveability Strategy (2023 - 2041) acknowledges that 'The wellbeing of all Sunshine Coast residents is intimately linked to and dependent upon the region's biodiversity and its preservation'. Section 2.3 states the following key objective: 'Biodiversity is valued, respected and used sustainably to support our lifestyle, livelihoods and sense of place'.

The Environmental Reserves Network Management Plan (2018 - 2027) recognises that conservation reserves, including those managed by the EVC, are significant ecologically, as well as socially, culturally and economically. Their effective management involves balancing the protection of biodiversity values and ecosystem services whilst facilitating public access for education, research and recreation. The plan emphasises that meaningful public engagement is essential to the community understanding and valuing protected areas, which in turn enhances their sustainable management into the future.

EVC Arts and Ecology Project opportunities are also a practical fulfilment of goals in the Sunshine Coast Creative Arts Plan (2023-2038), where MRRBG is particularly noted as a 'top hidden gem' in the regional creative landscape.

What is an EVC Arts & Ecology Project?

Arts and Ecology Projects are diverse in form, but all employ creative and/or cultural practices that connect with and respond to site-specific environments. Their 'why' must stem from curiosity, inquiry and learning – where creative practices unearth, investigate and make visible the intricacies of the natural world and our individual and collective embeddedness within it. Creative practices and projects at the EVC are a conduit for expressing relationship with place, to tell and discover the stories of our local environment. They can be a mechanism for education and engagement, as well as a research methodology through which practitioners and audiences explore and develop ecological and socio-ecological knowledge. Through the development and display of creative and/or cultural projects, practitioners celebrate environmental values, interrogate environmental connections and concerns, and educate and inspire visitors.

EVC Arts and Ecology Project outputs must include (either through process or product) an engagement experience for visitors aligned with the above definitions and strategic policies.

Opportunities currently include:

- Self-funded exhibitions (individual or collaborative)
- Self-funded residencies (individual or collaborative)
- Funded individual or collaborative residencies (limited annually by competitive EOI)



Left to right: Peta Jervois (2021) *Metamorphosis*, Arts Connect Inc.; Man & Wah, James Muller and Sue Davis (2022) *XPollinate* [various works]; Jennifer Matthews (2023) *Beautiful Alien*, Maleny Printmakers.

What is offered and what is required?

The EVC assist in the development and delivery of Arts and Ecology Projects, however they are fulfilled independently by the applicant/s. We understand that artists and groups also have goals and needs which drive and constrain their interests and capacity to be involved. The EVC will negotiate in good faith the project's 'fit', the level of support required, minimum hours and days expected and other such details as necessary for a successful residency, exhibition or mixed format project.

Arts and Ecology Projects are formalised through signed agreement, however this does not constitute a formal partnership or employment contract with Council.

Offered:

- In-kind (zero-charge) use of specific facilities:
 - o MCSR Cairncross Theatre, MRBBG Exhibition Room and MWS Mangrove Room.
 - o In-kind value estimates (current as of 2025):
 - 12 day residency \$2407.08 (inc. GST) not-for-profit rate,
 - 16 day exhibition \$3209.44 (inc. GST) not-for-profit rate or \$6615.84 (inc. GST) commercial rate,
 - Or equivalent pro-rata for negotiated days.
- Zero commission on artwork sales at the MRBBG Arts and Ecology Centre and MWS Mangrove Room.
- Option to run additional outreach (for example paid workshops, artist talks or light commercial activities) during residency or exhibition.
- Option to connect with conservation officers and research partners.
- Promotional support through available channels such as hard-copy onsite poster display (to be designed by EVC), Council websites and EVC social media accounts.
- Exhibition:
 - o SCC insurance of artworks whilst onsite,
 - o Gallery hook and cable hanging, and light system.
- Residency (funded only): fixed stipend as detailed below.
- Letters of support for applicants seeking external funding.
- Site induction and orientation, facility access, maintenance and building security.

Required:

- Signed Artist in Residence Agreement (residency) or Loan of Artwork Agreement (exhibition).
- Personal, Public and Professional Indemnity Insurance – copy of certificate of currency to be sighted.
- Responsibility for all associated costs including travel, freight, accommodation (if necessary), materials and meals.
- Timely supply of quality images and content for promotions.
- Independent promotion (outside of support offered above).
- Professional and safe conduct at all times – including with collaborators, staff, volunteers and the public.
- Blue card (if working directly with children through scheduled activities) and background check agreement.
- Exhibition: applicant responsible for freight, storage, curation, installation and demount of artworks, supervision, didactics and sales handling.
- 15% commission payable on artwork sales at MCSR Cairncross Theatre. Calculated at the completion of an exhibition through provision of sales documentation. Please note, the commission is directly reinvested towards costs associated with the installation, deinstallation and maintenance of the demountable gallery system.
- Post project follow-up, including conversational debrief and written evaluation on key outcomes and visitation statistics.

Residency details

Residency format:

- Duration to be negotiated in good-faith with sensitivity to facility and artist/s availability constraints.
- Funded residencies require minimum equivalent of 12 days total over 3 week period (for example 4 days per week for 3 weeks). A full day constitutes 6hrs or more.
- Self-funded residencies are a minimum of 8 days over a 2 week period.
- Specific opportunities may require a condensed format.
- EVC recognise that artists require non-public-facing time to undertake their work, and hours of open-studio vs. closed-studio will be negotiated and publicised.

Funding support:

- Self-funded residencies do not receive financial stipend from SCC.
- Hobby artists are encouraged to apply for self-funded residencies (refer to the National Association for Visual Artists career definitions).
- Once a proposal has been discussed and accepted, EVC may provide letters of support for external funding applications for example Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) and Regional Arts Fund (RAF).
- Funded residencies are limited annually to 3 (three) opportunities per financial year and selected by competitive EOI.
- Early and mid-career artists are encouraged to apply for funded residencies (refer to the National Association for Visual Artists career definitions). If annual allocation has been exhausted, early and mid-career artists can also apply for a self-funded residency.
- Funded residencies are paid a set \$2000.00 stipend (exc. GST).
- The amount available per residency is not per artist and group applicants must account for this in their decision-making and scheduling decisions. The lead applicant will receive the full stipend, SCC will not distribute part-amounts to individuals within a group.
- As per SCC procurement guidelines, payment will require establishment as a creditor in the SCC finance system, and the provision of a purchase order number for lodgement of tax invoice. Invoices must include an Australian Business Number (and if not, a Statement by Supplier Form) and GST status for tax purposes.

Who can apply for an Arts & Ecology Project?

Inclusion	The EVC encourages project proposals lead by and including First Nations artists. Projects that are inclusive of or elevate diverse voices.
Career level	Hobbyist, early and mid-career artists.
Discipline	Artists of all disciplines including visual 2D and 3D, mixed-media, environmental, writers, sound/acoustic, digital, performance, experimental and interdisciplinary.
Location	<p>Priority will be given to Sunshine Coast residents, as well as those residing in the surrounding Noosa, Gympie and Moreton Bay Local Government Areas, particularly where an environmental subject relates to the Sunshine Coast.</p> <p>Inter-regional, inter-state and/or international artists can also submit proposals however may need to consider external funding support options for accommodation and travel expenses, as these extra costs are not provided for.</p>
Age	Artists must be 18+years of age or under the auspice and supervision of an adult applicant.
Collaboration	<p>Groups (both informal interest groups and incorporated groups / societies) are encouraged.</p> <p>Please note, there must be one point of contact from a project 'lead' who will be responsible for communicating with EVC, signing associated paperwork on behalf of and liaising with their collaborators.</p>

Criteria for Proposal Assessment

Merit

The quality of the project concept (exhibition or residency) and demonstrated capacity of the artist/s to realise this concept within the support provided and agreed requirements.

Alignment

The proposal's alignment with and relevance to the EVC sites, interpretive themes and objectives, that meets the aims of an Arts and Ecology Project.

Impact

Potential for the project to impact the artist's practice, engage EVC audiences and contribute to EVC arts and ecological knowledge and programming.

Applicant support

For further information or assistance, please contact the EVC team.

Email (preferred): evc@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au with Arts and Ecology Project Proposal in subject line.

Phone: 07 5494 3023 (Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve office)

About the EVC sites

Each EVC has different environmental attributes, facilities, audiences and capacity, as described below.

The following details of importance apply across sites:

Visitor regulations:

Due to ecological sensitivities, including Federally and State listed species of significance, Arts and Ecology Projects must adhere to all visitor regulations. This includes staying on designated walking tracks and the prohibited disturbance to or collection of fauna, fungi and/or flora. Off-track access and/or handling and collection of fauna, fungi or flora material for cultural, creative or scientific purposes must be negotiated and permits may be required. As per biosecurity policy, plant, fungi and/or animal material cannot be brought onsite.

Transport:

Private transport is essential to accessing all three EVC.

Safety:

MRBBG and MWS are considered remote sites. In the interest of personal safety, successful applicants will be encouraged to arrange a site companion when needed (weekends at MRBBG / weekends and some weekdays at MWS) and personal telecommunications should always be carried. Days and times that an artist/s is onsite will be arranged through prior agreement and staff will assist where possible.

Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve (MCSR)



Left to right: Rainforest Discovery Centre, *Ficus watkinsiana* from canopy (photographer Adam Sebastian West 2019), Cairncross Theatrette exhibition by Queensland Wildlife Artists Society 2023.

Location and visitation:

MCSR is a 55 ha remnant subtropical rainforest (categorised as complex notophyll vine) located at 148 Mountain View Road Maleny, in the elevated hinterland on Jinibara Country.

Between 600 - 1400 people visit MCSR daily or more than 330 000 per year. This fluctuates according to weather, season and calendar events.

Facilities and attractions:

It is home to a contemporary Rainforest Discovery Centre, with an interpretive visitor space, a multipurpose room (the Cairncross Theatrette), a small research room and various public facilities. The Rainforest Discovery Centre is open and staffed 7 days per week (excluding select public holidays) from 9.30am – 3.30pm and the carpark is locked at 6pm. The Cairncross Theatrette on level 1 is accessible by stairs or lift. It is approximately 70m², with a 60 person seated capacity. The Theatrette is airconditioned and has a demountable gallery wall system, including hooks, wires, magnets and lights, as well as trestle tables, chairs, and a screen for presentations. Exhibiting wall space is 20.9 linear metres. It does not currently have plinths for presenting 3D works. There is a large LED screen for digital presentation and unsecured Wifi which can be intermittent.

The Mountain View Café on ground level is an independent commercial business operated 7 days per week. An active contingent of volunteers are onsite daily, welcoming visitors and guiding groups, including a busy school excursion program. The popular internal walking circuit is 1.7km, whilst the front of the reserve has an open picnic area and playground.

Access:

Staff provide access to the building. The Rainforest Discovery Centre has an accessible lift and designated wheelchair parking. Gates to the carpark are locked from 6pm – 7am daily.

Values and constraints:

MCSR is a biodiversity hotspot and significant habitat for fauna, fungi and flora species. A key constraint particular to MCSR is the 1941 Deed of Trust under which it operates. MCSR and its facilities, must be used for the purpose of “*preservation, conservation and exhibition of the natural flora and fauna.*” It is home to several threatened species and endemic fauna and flora populations, as well as critically endangered ecosystems.

Key interpretive themes:

Jinibara cultural heritage, community history and advocacy, remnant rainforest, biodiversity hotspot (including rare, endangered and endemic species), ecologically dynamic, significant habitat refuge, environmental resilience

and fragility, conservation research and learning, geological formation (Glass House Mountains view), children's wonder and observation, nature as therapy.

Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Garden (MRBBG)



Left to right: Maroochy Arts and Ecology Centre (front entrance), lagoon wall crossing in lower Botanic Garden, Sophie Munns (Seed Art Lab) undertaking 2021 residency.

Location and visitation:

MRBBG is an 82 ha bushland reserve and botanic garden (predominantly wet and dry sclerophyll) located on Palm Creek Road in Tanawha, it at the headwaters of the Mountain Creek catchment in the lower hinterland, Kabi Kabi Country.

It has a daily average of 280 visitors or more than 100 000 per year, fluctuating according to weather, season and calendar events.

Facilities and attractions:

The Maroochy Arts and Ecology Centre is a multi-purpose, single-level facility within MRBBG, comprising a café, exhibition space, shared lunch/workshop room and resource room. The exhibition space is approximately 50m² with an 80 person capacity, plus a spill-out courtyard adjacent. It has a permanent gallery wall system with track-lighting, cables and hooks. Exhibiting wall space is 25.6 linear metres. Six plywood plinths are available, as well as trestle-tables, chairs, a ceiling mounted projector and retractable screen. The Arts and Ecology Centre is not air-conditioned. There is a shared lunch/workshop room with basic kitchen facilities and limited storage.

MRBBG has several feature destinations including the Sculpture Garden, the Whipbird Playscape, the Fern Garden as well various arbours and picnic shelters. There are numerous circuit walking tracks ranging from 200m – 3+km. It attracts informal visitation (such as playgroups, birthday parties and picnickers) as well as formal wedding ceremonies and events. The Garden Café is operated as a social enterprise by the Compass Institute 5 days per week, 9.30am – 2.30pm. Volunteers are active in garden and built infrastructure maintenance mainly on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Council staff are onsite Monday - Friday in various roles.

Access:

Arts and Ecology Centre users access the facility independently via keylock. Applicants will be provided with a site-induction and entry/exit procedures. There is designated wheelchair parking and gates are locked at 6pm / 7pm (season dependent).

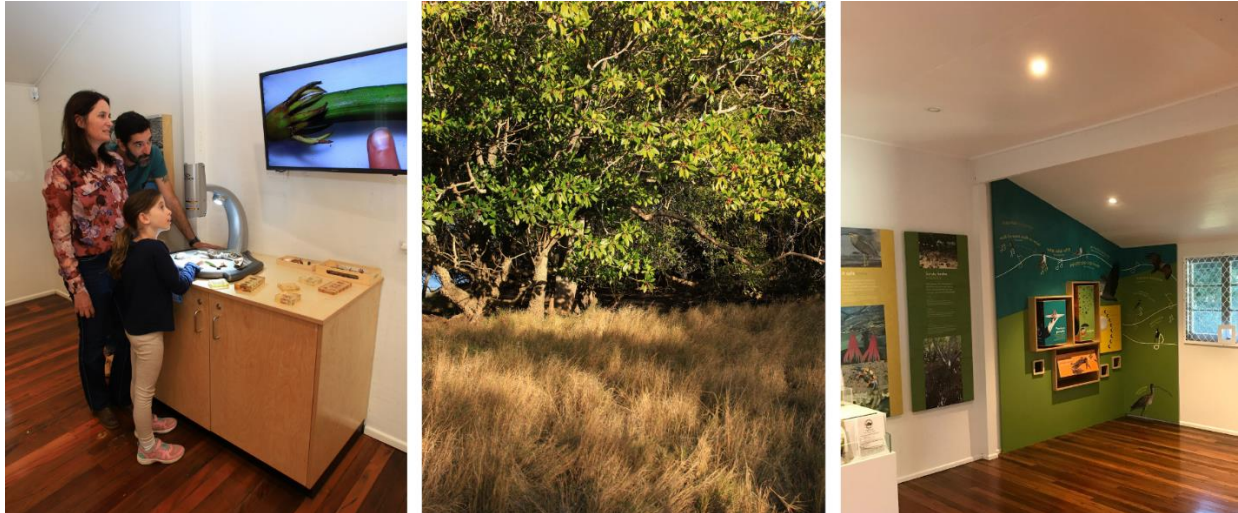
Values and constraints:

MRBBG cultivates and displays the Sunshine Coast's botanical diversity for the enjoyment and education of the community. There is substantially more external area and walking trail diversity at MRBBG than the other two EVC sites. It is home to several endangered plant species and resident Koala and Greater glider populations.

Key interpretive themes:

Kabi Kabi cultural heritage, community history and advocacy, curated display gardens showcasing Sunshine Coast botanical diversity (including rare and endangered species), habitat refuge (flora and fauna), conservation research and learning, art in the environment, children's play, nature as therapy.

Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary (MWS)



Left to right: Family using the micro-eye to observe mangrove calyx and propagule, rare grass community adjoining mangroves on Maroochy River, interpretive displays in the visitor centre.

Location and visitation:

MWS is more than 150 ha of mixed coastal forests (from wet sclerophyll forest through to melaleuca forest, casuarina woodland, saltmarsh and mangroves). Located at Sports Road, Bli Bli on the lowland area adjoining the Maroochy River in Kabi Kabi Country, MWS is the most significant and remnant reserve on the Maroochy River system. Visitation is approximately 13 000 per annum, with higher community access during the cooler months.

Facilities and attractions:

MWS is a sensitive coastal environment, accessed only via an elevated boardwalk which is 950m one-way leading to the Maroochy River's edge. It features a crab viewing deck, an audio trail, a climate watch trail and intermittent seating.

A small, self-guided interpretive facility is open most weekdays 9am – 4pm, staff dependent. The building also has a ground-level meeting room (the Mangrove Room) approximately 20m², and an adjacent outdoor pagoda which can fit 20 people. Trestle tables and chairs can be arranged.

A small support group of volunteers assist with scheduled guided walks, citizen science and advocacy projects.

Access:

The Mangrove Room is a self-access arrangement via keylock and alarm code and applicants will be given a site-induction. There is designated wheelchair parking.

Values and constraints:

MWS is within the Blue Heart designated area. It is home to coastal-dwelling and migratory shorebirds, vulnerable intertidal saltmarshes, the largest remnant stand of mangrove fern in Southeast Queensland and a population of endangered water mouse. Due to the wetland environment, mosquitoes and other biting insects are active during the warmer months and programming is only suitable from late May to early September.

MWS is considered a remote site and for safety reasons, days and hours of access will be coordinated with staff.

Key interpretive themes:

Kabi Kabi cultural heritage, South Sea Islander history, community involvement and advocacy, Maroochy River system, coastal and intertidal environment (marine interdependence), migratory birds, remnant and diverse ecosystems, significant habitat refuge (rare and endangered fauna and flora species), climate change, blue carbon, citizen science and nature as therapy.

