



An artist's impression of the centre.

Multi-arts centre gets thumbs up

DENICE BARNES

WYONG is out to become the cultural heart of the Central Coast.

Wyong Council has given the thumbs up to a 500-seat performing arts centre worth \$24 million in the heart of Wyong.

The masterplan for the multi-arts centre, to be officially called the Central Coast Arts and Conference Centre, went before Wednesday night's council meeting and was approved unanimously.

Working committee chairman Doug Eaton was delighted with the result.

The plan includes building the centre, which will replace the memorial hall, in two stages with a 500-seat theatre which can also be reduced to a 200-seat venue.

Stage one will see a stand-alone arts centre and the second stage will include a 150-seat studio, cafe and rehearsal rooms, gallery, meeting room and permanent administration area.

The name – changed from Wyong Shire Cultural Centre – was proposed because the centre would be a key venue in the Central Coast network of arts facilities.

"I am very excited because we have been working on this for six years," Cr Eaton said.

"The design contract cost \$1 million alone. "There is a real gap in the provision of facilities for the performing and visual arts.

"Stage one will be larger than Laycock St Theatre and cater better for dance groups with more stage area and a full fly tower (which moves backdrops and scenery)."

Cr Eaton concedes finding the money to build the centre may not be easy.

"We are proposing a four-way split between the Federal Government, the State Government, the council and the rest from the community, business and private sectors," he said.

In an ideal world, the centre will be open for business mid-2014.

While the masterplan has been approved by the council, the development application



Doug Eaton.