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Public Art Policy

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1. Purpose

Good public art, design and architecture can create a unique community identity that informs the sense of place and creates iconic branding of the council area.

The Federation Council Public Art Policy was created to respond to and reflect the community vision for Council's existing and future public art works within the area.

2. Background

The Public Art Policy has been developed to identify vision, themes and procedures and to guide the delivery of quality public art that reflects the aspirations of the people within the Federation Council area. The policy reflects current priorities and aspirations identified from within Council and with consideration of community consultation outcomes.

The Policy aims to:

- Develop a sense of identity and pride in the council area.
- Create high quality public spaces through the integration of public art, urban and landscape design.
- Support the delivery of innovative and quality contemporary public art for the council area.
- Increase the understanding and enjoyment of contemporary art by the community.
- Create opportunities for social inclusion through engagement practices that celebrate the diversity of the community.
- Encourage the incorporation of public art within key commercial developments.

3. Scope

This Public Art Policy covers all permanent, integrated or ephemeral artwork in a public space that is either commissioned by or in partnership with Federation Council. The development of public art projects will involve community engagement to review proposals or concepts and provide input regarding the artworks to be commissioned.

4. Definitions

Artist - An artist can be a person:

- Who has specialist training within their field (not necessarily in academic institutions) and involved in the creation of art as their profession.
- Who produces works in any of the arts that are primarily subject to aesthetic criteria.
- With high level interpretive, conceptualising and creative skills that result in the creation of artwork.
- Who has demonstrated professional standing through exhibitions and commissions and is considered an artist by his or her peers.

Public Realm – The public realm can be defined as including but not limited to streets, squares, parks and spaces that are within buildings that are accessible to the general public and in the ownership of, or under the care and control of public authorities (i.e. local or state government).

Public Art - For the purposes of this policy, is defined as any permanent or temporary art object, installation or activity in the public realm excluding galleries, museums and public collecting institutions.

In general, public art is sited on public land and has been purchased or is owned by a public authority. However, public art situated in or on private property that is visible and accessible to the public from within the public realm is also considered public art. The range of forms in which public art may be realised includes and is defined as:

Integrated Art Work – Art and design work that is embedded within signage, seating, paving, fences, urban design, landscape design, architectural design etc.

Ephemeral Public Art – artwork in temporary art spaces or platforms, such as lighting, projections, interventions and temporary installations, community engagement and place making initiatives.

Permanent Public Art – Artwork in this category might include signature works, landmarks, acquisition of existing art work for a specific site, commemorative or monumental works, site specific art work in a public place. All these terms relate to the fact that such works tend to be commissioned as set pieces of art in their own right. These artworks are often major commissions with significant budgets and therefore require a transparent and accountable commissioning process to ensure the best artists are considered and that due process occurs.

Contemporary Art - Any Artwork created today which is innovative for its time, comments on or otherwise engages with issues relevant to its time or uses materials and processes that are at the forefront of arts practice within their particular field at the time can be classed as contemporary art.

5. Council's Role in Public Art

Public art exists in the public realm. It can elevate the aesthetic profile for our urban environments, play a role in attracting creative businesses and workers, and encourage the growth of a culturally informed public.

Local government has a significant role in shaping the public realm. Council has opportunities to increase public art through Council commissions, acquisition by purchase, donation or transfer and by facilitation and advocacy.

Council has high profile, well utilised and publicly accessible open spaces that include parks, reserves, squares and retail precincts. Some of these sites are suitable for permanent works, whilst many are suitable for temporary public art projects - responsive to emerging local issues and used in physical environments and contexts that are changing over time.

Council is also the owner of important community infrastructure such as playgrounds, halls and libraries. These represent opportunities for the community to express its creative aspirations through public art.

As a planning authority, Council also has the capacity to encourage public artworks as part of private developments. The provision of public artwork can significantly improve the amenity of private developments, including the aesthetics and perception of public accessibility to individual architectural projects.

As a place manager of streets and as a local service provider, Council also has the capacity to facilitate public artworks using a place management approach; the commissioning of murals is a good example of this.

6. Management of Public Art

Much of private and community infrastructure development impacts on the public realm and contributes to the physical fabric of the council area. Council and private developers have the opportunity to contribute to a creative and liveable Federation Council area. This can be best achieved where creativity is embraced at the concept stages of the project and when public art is included as an important consideration of the design.

To increase public art in the council area, Council will explore opportunities to incorporate public art into future community infrastructure projects and will identify suitable sites in the public realm for temporary and permanent commissions.

To deliver the best outcome for the public from an aesthetic, functional and economic basis public art should be considered (where appropriate) from the earliest planning stages of capital work projects. This allows for the design and function to influence the art and vice versa. This also enables public art commissions to include diverse art forms, practices and styles in response to each unique infrastructure project, site and context.

Integrated Public Artworks

Many opportunities to integrate public art as part of streetscape or community building projects arise from urban design and infrastructure improvement projects. These provide valuable and appropriate opportunities for public art and consideration for its inclusion should be part of the scoping phase of Council led projects.

Temporary Public Art

The commission of temporary public art, sometimes on an ongoing platform, provides new points of interest to Federation Council's community, opportunities for emerging artists and as a whole is more affordable than permanent works of art.

The identification of sites for the installation of temporary art (including billboards, projection sites, walls of buildings) will be managed by Council through the development of a public art program.

Murals/Street Art

Murals and street art are important art forms in their own right with a long history and the ability to respond to architecture, culture and social contexts. It is also recognised that murals and street art treatments can be used as a graffiti management tool.

Where appropriate, murals will be used to improve open space amenity and streetscapes. Mural and/or street art projects should focus on addressing gaps, facilitating and fostering opportunities for emerging artists, artists from diverse backgrounds and those with capacity to produce high quality murals.

Council recognises the ongoing interest in murals and street art from artists, community members and businesses and will endeavour to play a facilitating role to enable private commissions. Reference documents such as fact sheets will be produced to provide information and guidance in this space.

In terms of murals and street art (including but not limited to paste up, stencil and spray-art) Council's role is:

- Service provision (graffiti management projects) particularly in coordination with private property owners
- Facilitation - by providing information and guidance
- Commissioning

Council's Public Art Program

Council will take a leading role in including public art as a primary consideration in community infrastructure developments and will encourage private developers to do the same.

A Public Art Program that identifies priority areas in the council area for Public Art installations will be developed and reviewed every 5 years. Council will also encourage and facilitate opportunities for public art to be commissioned by private property owners.

Implementation of the Public Art Program will be dependent on:

- The provision of funding in future Council budgets.
- The ability to attract external grant funding for public art.
- The development of sponsorship or partnership arrangements with community, local businesses or industry.
- Voluntary developer contributions that include public art.

7. Process for commissioning or acquiring public art

Public art commissions and acquisitions will be assessed by the criteria outlined below. This applies to Council commissions, acquisitions and negotiated or unsolicited donations and transfers from external parties.

Assessment Criteria

1. Standards of excellence, innovation and quality
2. Relevance and appropriateness of the work to the context of the proposed site
3. Consistency with Council's current planning, heritage, environmental and social policies
4. Consideration of public safety and the public's access to and use of the public domain
5. Consideration of ongoing maintenance and durability requirements
6. Adequate funding and resources
7. Responsiveness to any brief provided
8. Maintenance of Artworks
 - Council recognises the importance of adequate and appropriate maintenance of public artworks. As such, the life of the work should be considered in the commissioning phase and any ongoing maintenance requirements, and the cost for such maintenance, form a core part of the consideration for the work; an assessment of the work's ongoing durability, life of materials and the limitation of maintenance are criteria for Council's consideration.
 - Council also recognises the ephemeral nature of some works, especially in the area of murals and street art works, and outside exceptional circumstances, adopts a five year lifespan ceiling for murals and street art commissions. Council understands that many works may have an even shorter lifespan.

8. References & Associated Documents

Guidelines for Public Art in Private Development

Horsham Rural City Public Art Policy

Public Art Policy Yarra City

Cairns Regional Council Public Art Policy

9. Policy History

Version	Date	Changes / Amendments
1.0	29/06/2018	The Public Art Policy will be reviewed every four years.

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10. Reviews

The Public Art Policy will be reviewed in June 2022.

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