



# Public Art Guidelines

*July 2023*

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## Background

These guidelines aim to foster a vibrant and inclusive public realm that celebrates creativity, cultural diversity, and community engagement through the integration of public art, including murals on built structures and installations in public spaces. It is envisioned that the policy will promote a sense of place, identity, and civic pride, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with *the Arts and Culture Policy 2020* and *the Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-24*. The guiding themes of Participation, Profile and Place have informed the development of these guidelines.

- **Participation** through the development of the Public Arts Advisory Group and Arts and Culture Grant opportunities
- **Profile** through more opportunities to deliver public art.
- **Place** through using public art to activate public space.

## 1. The importance of Public Art

### 1.1 The importance of public art to Northern Grampians Shire Council

Northern Grampians Shire Council recognises that public art projects have a special role to play in connecting communities. Public art and community art projects that are tailored to diverse sectors such as young people, older people, children, diverse cultures etc, lead to an enhanced sense of wellbeing of the participants, as well as greater community awareness of these sectors of our community.

### 1.2 Objectives for Public Art Projects

Public Art projects must aim to:

- build community resilience by increasing community connectedness and inclusivity,
- activate public space and interaction throughout the shire,
- provide economic benefit through tourism,
- interpret historical sites and tell important local stories by reflecting the cultural and social fabric of community,
- encourage community and visitor engagement with a particular place,
- explore and encourage awareness of global, national, or local issues and themes, and
- develop opportunities for collaboration between artists, property owners, and relevant authorities to promote shared ownership and preservation of public art.

## 2. Public Art Definitions

### 2.1 Definition of public art:

Public art refers to artistic works, including but not limited to sculptures, murals, installations, and other creative expressions, that are created with the intention of being publicly accessible and engaging with the community in public spaces. Public art serves to enhance the aesthetic quality, cultural vibrancy, and social cohesion of public spaces, reflecting the values, history, and aspirations of the community it represents.

### 2.2 Types of public art

Public art may include ephemeral, temporary or permanent art such as music, poetry, sound and light installations, temporary installations, street furniture, street lighting, gardens, paving, water features, sculptures, street theatre, parades, and street art. Installations in Public Spaces are subject to council approval.

Some common types of public art are:

- Murals on built structures. Murals on buildings and structures in public spaces are recognised as an important form of public art that contributes to the visual identity and character of a city or community.
- Installations in public open space, such as sculptures in parks and streets. Roundabouts are not considered suitable locations for public art.
- Multimedia, and digital art that can create projected or screened, or electronically conveyed images and films, and soundscapes in public places. These may be movement activated or at specific times of day and night.
- Festivals may also include elements of public art such as exhibitions of actual or projected works of art, or parades and performances in public places. However, only those elements that offer free access to all can be considered public art.
- Landscaping and gardens may also be considered works of public art. Gardens developed with experienced landscape artists may help connect diverse sectors of the community and enhance significant and everyday places through integrated aesthetic design.
- Street furniture, signage, and functional fixtures.
- Ephemeral art such as street festivals.

## 2.3 Duration of Art

### 2.3.1 Permanent works of art (2 to 20 years)

Permanent works of art will be made of durable materials and be affixed to a location for an agreed lifespan (usually a minimum of 2 years and up to 20 years). Permanent public artwork requires regular maintenance and conservation and is intended for long term installation before decommissioning. The works are generally commissioned as site specific works and are accessioned after 5 years.

### 2.3.1 Temporary works of art (up to 1-2 years)

Temporary Public Art will be made of durable materials and be affixed to a location for an agreed lifespan (up to 1-2 years). Some works of very short duration may be able to be repeated, electronically or manually activated.

## 2.4 Ways public art is created.

Northern Grampians Shire Council may acquire or sponsor public art in any of the following ways:

- Commissioning of works of art for specific sites or projects.
- Council led projects including landscaping, capital works and infrastructure where art may be incorporated into some part of the design.
- Community arts projects or workshops where community groups utilise a public space within the shire.
- Community arts projects or workshops where an artist works with the community on a project and the resulting works are displayed in a public place on a temporary or permanent basis.
- Purchase of existing works of art.
- Acceptance of donation of art works.
- Projects funded by grants, philanthropic trusts, individuals etc.
- Integrated art: works that are developed as part of a capital works project.
- Partnerships with, or sponsorship of, public art by a group, organisation, government department, or commercial enterprise.
- Public art that is curated on a theme, commemoration or specific event supported by the shire.
- Public art produced during Artist in Residence projects.

For more information about the delivery process see 3.1 below.

### 3. How Public Art gets delivered in the shire.

For Public Art to be delivered in a manner that achieves its objectives (see 2.2) the process must be transparent, accessible, and equitable. The process outlined below details a model of shared responsibility and decision making between Council and community to create well-planned, sustainable, and public art projects that satisfy the objectives in 2.2.

#### 3.1 Process Map

The indicative process for delivering Public Art is shown in the table below:

	Stage	Deliverable	Responsible
1	A public art idea is proposed.	Idea communicated through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement channels (see 4.2.2)</li> <li>Grant opportunity (see 4.2.3)</li> <li>Council led initiative</li> </ul>	Community  Council
2a	Assessment (Council Public Art Working Group) For both Grant assessments and project specific assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment on viability</li> <li>Strategic alignment</li> <li>As per criteria</li> </ul>	Council
2b	Assessment (Public Art Advisory Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment on artistic merit and other artistic considerations</li> <li>Inputs into and reviews artist brief</li> <li>Projects may be referred to Council for briefing or endorsement as needed and determined through assessment</li> </ul>	Council
3	Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish/advise on appropriate source of funding depending on project.</li> </ul>	Council, community
4	Procurement and Delivery (Pending outcome of stage 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Public Art Working Group and Public Art Advisory Group assesses and reviews contractor RFQs</li> <li>Engagement of contractor</li> <li>Project management and delivery</li> </ul>	Council and Panel
5	Review and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both assessment panels to review artwork once a year</li> <li>Maintain and manage artwork for its lifespan as per deaccessioning procedure</li> </ul>	Council

#### 3.2 Stage 1: A public art idea is proposed.

##### 3.2.1 Public Art Opportunities

Council will audit and access for suitability sites across the shire for public art installations and murals. This list will be available on council's website and seek to guide public interest by identifying appropriate locations.

##### 3.2.2 Engagement channels

Council is dedicated to involving and enabling the community to take ownership of public spaces by contributing ideas and opportunities regarding Public Art. To enable this, Council will provide opportunities to input into relevant projects, strategies and plans as they arise.

This could include:

- When a council identified public art opportunity exists i.e., a new wall as part of a public space project with the opportunity for a mural.
- The development of relevant council plan and strategies i.e. The Arts and Culture Strategy and Action Plan or place specific planning such as a town or street masterplan.

Outside of the project and plan specific opportunities above, the community can engage with Council on Public Art ideas and opportunities ongoingly through:

- Consulting the Public Art Advisory Group.
- Contacting council directly via email or phone

### **3.3 Stage 2: Assessment**

All public art proposals will be assessed by a Council and community panel. This will ensure that many factors, risk and opportunities have been identified and the proposal is being assessed thoroughly and fairly.

#### **3.3.1 Public Art Criteria**

All Public Art projects will be assessed by the Public Art Working Group (Council staff) and the Public Art Advisory Group (Community along with Council). This aims to ensure the quality, viability and sustainability of all public art projects. Both groups will assess public art projects against these criteria:

- Alignment to the Objectives for Public Art Projects (2.2)
- Response to the brief (if relevant)
- Response to place (of proposed site)
- Quality of the artwork and artist
- Promoting Accessibility and Inclusivity
- Safety and suitability
- Cost of life and sustainability
- Permission of Landowner/Manager/ Business
- Heritage or Cultural considerations

##### **3.3.1.1. Alignment with Council Strategies**

The proposed public art should align with the one or all of the objectives of the Arts and Culture Strategy which are to:

- Increase participation in and collaboration of the arts in the Northern Grampians Shire.
- Improve the profile of the arts.
- Capitalise on the unique place where art is created.

To produce the outcomes that enable:

- an inclusive creative community through participation
- connected reputable arts community by raising the profile.
- activated town centres and rural communities.

Other associated Council Strategies and Plans are listed below. This list will change as Council prioritises and strategic directions changes over time.

##### **3.3.1.2 Response to brief**

The brief will outline the key objectives, considerations, and the selection criteria required of submissions to design and deliver public art. All of these must be responded to in the submission.

##### **3.3.1.3 Response to place**

Consideration must be given to the context in relation to the site in which the public art is proposed. This includes how the work will be viewed and interacted with by the public. Accessibility must also be considered.

### **3.3.1.4 Quality of the artwork and artist**

- While the quality of the artwork and artist are primary considerations, public art undertaken by the community will be driven by the objectives centred around participation, inclusion and collaboration.
- Public art is usually made or designed by an artist or creative, with or without community participation.
- Public art undertaken by a professional artist will at all times reflect a high standard of artistic practice.

### **3.3.1.5 Promoting Accessibility and Inclusivity:**

- Public art should be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of age, ability, or background. Efforts will be made to ensure that public art installations and experiences are inclusive and diverse.
- Artists and stakeholders will be encouraged to consider accessibility requirements during the design and implementation of public art projects.
- Public engagement and feedback mechanisms will be established to involve the community in the selection, placement, and maintenance of public art, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents.

### **3.3.1.6 Safety and suitability**

All public art must be safe for all members of the community to enjoy. Considerations must be given to the impacts of the piece of public art on public space and how it may increase risk on passers-by or users of that public space.

### **3.3.1.7 Cost of life and sustainability**

Council must consider the ongoing costs that are associated with well managed public art and the costs associated with this upkeep. All projects will be assessed on the cost to first establish the piece of art, and the ongoing maintenance for its planned lifespan. Some key impacts on cost of life include:

- Choice of materials
- Location

### **3.3.1.8 Permission of Land Owner/Manager/ Business**

Permission must be sought from the Land Owner, Land Manager or Business prior to the assessment of any public art works proposed for the relevant site.

### **4.3.1.9 Heritage and Cultural Permission**

Heritage and Cultural Permission must be sought prior to the assessment of any public art works proposed for the relevant site.

## **3.3.2 Assessment Panels**

### **3.3.2.1 Council Public Art Working Group**

The Public Art Working Group membership will be made up of Council staff from relevant departments including:

- Community Development
- Placemaking (Open Space Planning)
- Parks and Gardens
- Infrastructure
- Relevant Council officers such as engineers, planning, heritage, arts and tourism will be invited as required for specific projects.

and be responsible for:

- Contributing to the development of the project brief, if required
- Assessment of proposals and grants that relate to Public Art
- Cross departmental updates on projects and incidents that relate to Public Art



The membership and responsibilities of this Working Group demonstrates Council's commitment to well-planned and sustainable public art.

### **3.3.2.2 Public Art Advisory Group**

The Public Art Advisory Group will be a community led body that advises and assesses on Public Art in the Shire. The Public Art Advisory Group's first meeting of the year will be to establish and endorse the Terms of Reference for the Group. Terms of reference must include:

- The Public Art Advisory Group will comprise members with a wide range of professional and community art expertise, especially in the area of public art, art curatorship, architecture and design.
- The Chair of the Advisory Group must be a member of the community.
- Relevant Council officers such as engineers, planning, heritage, arts and tourism will be co-opted as required. The Public Art Advisory Group will have representation across the Shire and be appointed through expressions of interest to Council.
- The selection of the Panel will be made by Council officers. Selection will be based on relevant expertise, geographic representation across the Shire, and diversity of culture, gender and age.
- A minimum of 2 people from within Council and a minimum of 4 external people will form the Panel. Members are to be selected from communities or groups involved with the specific project.
- Membership of the PAAG will expire after one year and require a re-application.
- Members must have the appropriate skills and time to fulfil their role.

The Public Art Advisory Group will be responsible for

- Assisting in the assessment of Arts and Culture Grants that select the initiatives to:
  - design and/or deliver smaller scale public art murals to activate public spaces.
  - design larger scale public art projects and installations for council to deliver.
- Assisting in the assessment of public art submissions
- Providing key stakeholder/partner feedback in relevant strategies and plans
- Providing advice and assistance for other Public Art projects as required

## **3.4 Stage 3: Funding Public Art**

The guidelines recognise the need for financial support and resources to facilitate the creation, maintenance, and conservation of public art.

All projects will be subject to funding availability.

Collaborative partnerships between government agencies, private organisations, artists, and community stakeholders will be encouraged to secure funding and support the ongoing sustainability of public art initiatives.

- Annual Budget Allocation for Council Funded Public Art: Council may initiate public art projects independently. Council may also Working across departments to identify paid opportunities for arts practitioners to contribute to the overall design of public place projects.
- Council Grants: Council has provision for arts and culture project funding as part of its Arts and Culture Grants program for projects under \$5000. See 4.1 for Arts and Culture Grant Funding Stream
- Embedded in Capital Works Budget. Council may integrate public art projects as part of larger building and infrastructure projects Artful design: This includes Integrated art: Where possible, utilise existing budgets for seating, paving, lighting, parks and gardens, special signage etc to commission unique objects designed or made by artists.
- External Funding including Partnerships: Additional funding may be sourced through partnerships with local organisations, community groups and enterprises and local, state and federal government.

### 3.4.1 NGSC Arts and Culture Grants

The Northern Grampians Shire Council Arts and Culture Grants are open for two Rounds each year. Applications are accepted from local community not-for-profit groups and organisations that align with our Arts and Culture Strategy objectives to create:

- An inclusive creative community, through participation.
- A well-respected and connected arts community, by raising the profile of the aforementioned.
- Activated town centres and rural communities, through the celebration of place.

#### Purpose of the funding:

The Arts and Culture Grant Program will support initiatives that:

- Offers workshops, training and activities that provide opportunity for community to participate in arts and culture.
- Design and/or deliver smaller scale public art murals to activate public spaces.
- Design larger scale public art projects and installations for council to deliver.

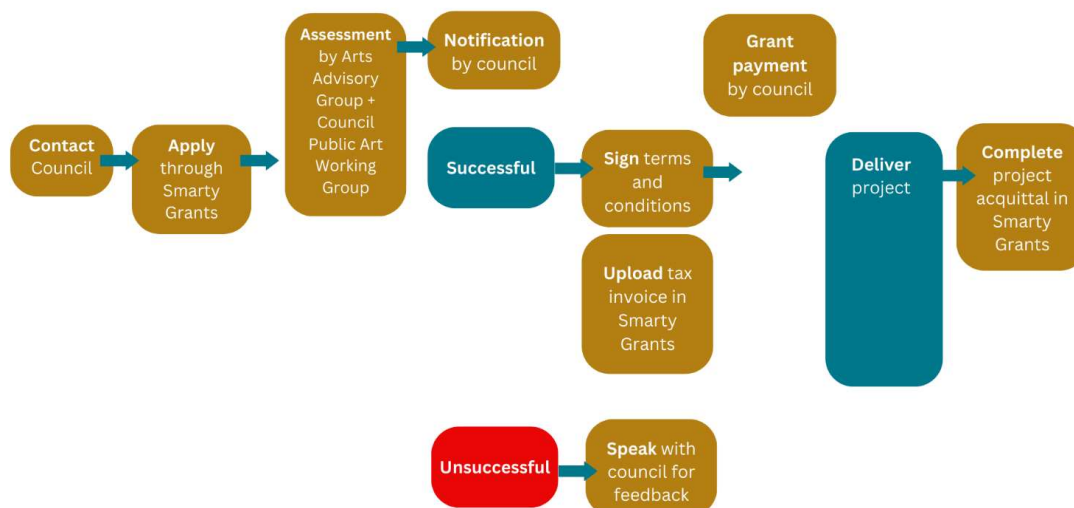
Please see Arts and Culture Grants Guidelines on the Northern Grampians Shire website for reference.

#### Availability

Applications for Arts and Culture Grant funding can be up to \$5000.

Public Art projects proposed for council owned and or managed facilities and funded through the Arts and Culture Grants are assessed by the NGSC Arts Working Group and Public Art Advisory Group.

#### Northern Grampians Shire Council Grant Assessment Process.



Arts and Culture Grant applicants require Landowner/Land Manager consent for any public art on private property. Heritage or other considerations may trigger a planning permit. Cultural considerations may require permission from appropriate First Nations land councils.

### **3.4.2 Other sources of Public Art Funding**

- State and Federal governments and agencies, philanthropic trusts Council will explore grants and other funding opportunities.
- Private or business donations, bequests and sponsorship Council will consider offers of existing artworks for public places, funded proposals for new public artworks, bequests and other offers of funding for public art in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.

These guidelines also apply to privately funded projects on private property.

### **3.4.3 Donations and Bequests**

Donated work must meet the assessment criteria in section 4.3.1, in addition, Council may:

- The donor may be required to make an advance cash contribution toward the maintenance of the artwork for the first five years.
- Donors will be required to sign an agreement granting ownership of works donated to Council.
- Donations and sponsorship will be acknowledged on appropriate signage and documented in the public art register.
- The acceptance of a donation does not imply any rights of that organisation or person to control management of the project.
- Loans of artworks to Council will not be considered.

## **3.5 Stage 4: Procurement and Delivery**

The procedures detailed below assumes Council is the primary project manager for the delivery of a piece of public art.

If community groups are delivering public art through a NGSC Public Art grant, Council will be involved in the project planning and delivery. Each project will have different needs and Council's involvement will be detailed in a successful grant's funding conditions.

### **3.5.1 Request for tender and assessment**

Both the Public Art Working Group and the Public Art Advisory Group will be involved in the development of an artist's brief during the assessment process. Representatives from both will be invited to the procurement panel to ensure that the chosen artist aligns with their intentions within the brief.

### **3.5.2 Procurement**

Where Council is the primary project manager of the piece of public art, standard procurement policies and practices will apply. More information on this can be found within the [Procurement Policy \(ngshire.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/procurement-policy)

## **3.6 Stage 5: Review and Maintenance**

### **3.6.1 Evaluation and Maintenance**

Regular evaluation of public art installations will be conducted to ensure their continued relevance, condition, and alignment with the policy objectives. Adequate resources and plans for the maintenance, conservation, and restoration of public art will be established to preserve the integrity and longevity of the artworks. Collaboration between artists, community organisations, and relevant authorities will be fostered to address issues related to vandalism, damage, or deterioration of public art, ensuring prompt action and restoration.

### **3.6.2 Accessioning/recording of public art works**

All permanent works of public art in the Shire will become part of the Shire's collection. Ownership of 'pop up' installations and semi-permanent artworks will be determined by project and in the project planning phase. When received all works will be catalogued, photographed, and assessed for condition. The following details will be recorded in a suitable database: Name of artist, date of artwork, title if any, medium, date of acquisition, name of commissioning body or sponsor, donor and image.

### **3.6.3 Maintenance of works of art**

Artworks in public places are significant and valuable assets for the Northern Grampians Shire Council. All new works of art installed in public places must be supplied with maintenance instructions, preferably written by the artist. Works of art that are subject to the vagaries of weather, interaction with people and natural decaying processes, will be inspected as required to assess and prevent damage.

Inspections of permanent works will be carried out as required to ensure safety and the integrity of the work and avoid the necessity for costly repair later. Similarly, when funding is being sought for a public art project, maintenance will be included in the budget, if appropriate.

### **3.6.4 Conservation and Care**

Council will continue to regularly assess its public art works, including works in its Historical Assets Register. The conservation and maintenance of its collection of art in public spaces, such as murals and statues and well as memorials and monuments will be assessed. Items for priority conservation will be listed annually according to the budget allocation. Priority works and items will be assessed and treated by professional conservators where required.

### **3.6.5 Deaccessioning works of art**

From time to time works of art in the public domain may become damaged beyond reasonable repair, or cease to have public relevance, or the site may be so changed that the work no longer fits or suits the site. In the case of works posing a risk to the public immediate removal may be necessary. In these cases, the Public Art Advisory Panel will consider the following options and advise Council on the most suitable option:

- Relocation of a work to a more suitable site
- If total removal is required donors in the first case, or artists, will be offered return of the artwork.
- Donation of work to a school or other public utility
- Sale of work, with funds raised used for other public art projects.
- Destruction of artworks will only be considered as a last resort.
- Repurposing, reuse, or renewal of existing elements

### **3.6.6 Monitoring and Review**

The Public Art Guidelines 2023 should be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis and progress reported to Council. Where opportunities are available, feedback will be provided to specific interest groups and the general community. It will provide an opportunity to highlight the Shire's achievements to date and provide the ability to adjust programs accordingly.

The Public Art Guidelines will be reviewed annually to ensure that the Council maintains a strategic plan for the future planning, delivery and management of art and cultural works, assets and programs.

### **3.6.7 Associated Documents**

Council Plan 2021-25  
Municipal Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25  
Community Plans - where relevant  
Community Access Plan 2014-16  
Arts and Culture: Audit and Opportunities Report 2016  
Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-24  
Art and Culture Action Plan 2022-25