



Public art policy

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1. Purpose

Public art adds wonder to everyday life. Underpinning our vision to be the most liveable, sustainable and innovative place in Australia, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's public art policy interprets the LGA's unique cultural, historical and natural environments through a program of public art.

Port Macquarie Hastings Council recognises that public art strengthens the natural assets of the region and provides unique attractions that are intrinsic to Council's cultural vision for the region. Council is committed to integrate striking and evocative public art into infrastructure and urban design projects.

This policy is supported by Council's Public Art Guidelines and Master Plan.

2. Statement

The creative industries have helped the region's recovery post Covid-19. Through activation and re-activation of dormant or under-utilised spaces, we want our public art to be celebrated locally and recognised nationally.

Public art is significant to the LGA because these artworks;

- enrich public spaces
- engage the community and visitors
- can deliver economic benefit including a boost in tourism / visitation
- provide opportunities for local and regional creatives to participate in public art projects
- create opportunities for shared experiences
- form part of capital investment as a creative region
- delivers a unique sense of place and time
- deepens a sense of belonging
- help identify and create contemporary public art narratives (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), sharing community stories with residents and visitors.

Council will ensure that public artworks are relevant, meaningful and respond to the environment. Building the capacity of our local creative industries and enabling local communities to undertake artistic projects benefits the creative economy. The Public Art Policy details the framework of program parameters, decision-making, funding, procurement and management for public art throughout the Port Macquarie-Hastings region.

When planning new public art, Council is committed to collaboration and consultation with the community, professional artists, architects, landscape designers, planners and developers, and other professionals.

3. Scope

This Policy aims to:

- affirm the critical role, knowledge, values and insights of Traditional Owners in the planning of site-specific artworks
- provide a clear purpose for investment in public art
- provide clarity on the role Council plays in achieving a portfolio of notable public art
- provide guidance on delivery of commissions through transparent processes
- target our resources effectively
- provide confidence for external collaborators and partners
- encourage local creatives to participate in public art projects

4. Principles

In the creation of public art, Council will:

- engage the cultural knowledge, values and insights of Traditional Owners, where appropriate
- undertake research that enables public art to reveal stories and community spirit
- foster new connections, thinking and activation
- strive for excellence that generates success and recognition for our region
- support public art through new experiences and a sense of the unexpected
- showcase our landscape and the diversity of our natural environment

Public art is publicly accessible, original art that enriches the region and evokes meaning. It includes permanent visual art (e.g. murals, sculptures), installations, events and other temporary works.

Public artworks will be considered in the following type of projects in accordance with Council's Public Art Masterplan:

- Council infrastructure projects
- gateways and thresholds (transport nodes) - arterial corridors / cycleways and walkways
- streetscape projects - laneways and community spaces / leisure and entertainment precincts
- public spaces
- festivals, events and celebrations
- private developer projects; and
- community and artist led projects

Funding

The public art program will be funded via a range of opportunities, including;

- Council investment - specific allocations considered via the annual budget process and as a component of key capital projects (to be defined)
- private development - as outlined in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Development Control Plan
- grants
- community or business-led initiatives or collaborations

Procurement of Public Art

Public Art will be procured via a range of methods, and in accordance with the processes identified in Council's Public Art Guidelines. These include:

- Council commissions via open expression of interest, limited tender and direct commission. These commissions will be subject to consistent public art assessment criteria
- donations by artists and members of the community, on the basis that they are professional artworks and meet the donations guidelines
- community initiated, where an individual, community group or other external party create and or fund a piece of public art

Each procurement will be assessed against Council's Public Art Assessment Criteria. Council's Public Art guidelines will detail the appropriate assessment body, which may include Council staff, and Council's Professional Reference Group.

The key criteria include:

1. Public Art Policy and planning alignment
2. design merit, integrity and engagement
3. place and site
4. design life - context compliance, access and viability

Managing and Maintaining Public Art

All procured artwork will be added to Council's asset register and detail a description of the artwork, maintenance/restoration requirements and considerations for decommissioning.

Where circumstances change and an artwork is rendered inappropriate or requires relocation, Council will consult with the artist and consider requirements regarding insurance, risk assessment, valuation, engineering and legal, before making a decision on the future management/location of the artwork.

5. References and Related Documents

The Port Macquarie-Hastings Public Art Policy and Plan (2024-2029) draws upon the following Council documents, in respect of both governance and vision for public art in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region:

- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Cultural Plan (2021-2025)
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Development Control Plan 2013 (Version 14, 2024)
- Port Macquarie Hastings Destination Management Plan 2020-2024
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Towards 2030 Community Strategic Plan
- Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021

6. Definitions

Public art - is any visual media that is planned and executed to be seen in the public domain, usually outside the traditional gallery/museum system and accessible to all. Public art can adopt a wide range of art forms and can be permanent, temporary or movable, or installations such as street banners, performance-based work, or lighting and multi-media installations utilising photographic, digital or illuminated imagery.

Public Art Guidelines - provide further detail to assist with decisions around the acquisition, management and disposal of public art.

Group Manager - third tier management position, with title Group Manager

Council officer - A member of Council staff.

7. Responsible Officer

For more information on the Public Art policy and its associated documents please contact the Senior Cultural Officer.

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