

---

# Public Art Policy

The City of Sydney will create a public art program which is both internationally recognised for its excellence and a source of inspiration and pride for its citizens.

## Purpose

The City of Sydney (City) is committed to the development of a tolerant, diverse, prosperous and sustainable city which values its rich natural, cultural and urban heritage.

Art and culture make a city stimulating and memorable and create a flourishing and outward-looking environment of which its communities can be justly proud.

As the most visible and accessible art form, public art plays a role of unprecedented importance in contributing to the poetic dimension of the city. Thriving art and culture are the great indicators of a city's pulse and should have a palpable presence throughout the city.

As indicated in Sustainable Sydney 2030 the City's economic and social wellbeing is closely associated with innovation and creativity, and the richness and diversity of its cultural life. These connections provide the bonds that maintain the City's identity and social cohesion in an era of constant change. The City's Cultural Policy (2014) reinforces the City's commitment to creativity in the public domain through public art

The Public Art Policy provides a clear, sustainable and forward-looking framework of principles which express the City's commitment to the vital role of art in the overall strategic planning of the city and the implementation of Sustainable Sydney 2030. The Public Art Policy is complemented by the City Art Public Art Strategy to guide the way in which this commitment will take place.

The Public Art Policy has been developed by the City Design Unit, in consultation with City Projects Design (Public Art) unit working with the City of Sydney Public Art Advisory Panel.

## Scope

The Public Art Policy guides and forms the criteria for the assessment of all public art commissioned by the Council, or acquired by purchase, donation or transfer, as well as providing a framework for the management and promotion of the collection of public art, known as the City of Sydney Public Art Collection, and identified as "City Art".

The Public Art Policy takes as its starting points the aims to:

- create an inclusive environment that fosters creativity, knowledge and innovation;
- recognise that the City's collection of outdoor monuments, memorials and artworks and its ongoing program of temporary and permanent artworks contribute to and reflect Sydney's unique identity; and
- acknowledge a framework to be built on and expanded.

The key feature of the Public Art Policy is its proposal to continue to integrate art into the fabric of the city. Public art can enrich the public domain and artists can contribute to the shaping and transforming of the urban realm in ways which reflect, accentuate and give meaning to Sydney’s unique environment, history and community.

The overall goal of the Public Art Policy is to generate significant benefits, tangible and intangible, in the long-term development of Sydney as a sustainable city as envisioned in Sustainable Sydney 2030.

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
Art	The term “art” is defined as the product of practitioners who intend their work and activities to be seen and read as art. It embraces material and immaterial products and concepts emanating from the imaginative and creative thinking of artists.
Public art	The term “public art” is defined in the broadest sense as artistic works or activities accessible to the public. The work may be of a temporary or permanent nature. Located in or part of a public space or facility provided by both the public and private sector, public art also includes the conceptual contribution of an artist to the design of public spaces and facilities.
City art	The Public Art Policy and Public Art Strategy, use the term “City Art” to define a new program for public art at the City of Sydney drawing on Sustainable Sydney 2030, embracing permanent and temporary installations and artworks reflecting the changing ways artists and artworks engage with the life of the city, its communities and visitors.

## Policy statement

Drawing on Sustainable Sydney 2030 the Public Art Policy and Public Art Strategy include 8 Guiding Principles for the prioritisation and implementation of public art across the City of Sydney local government area.

### 1. Align significant City Art projects with major Sustainable Sydney 2030 urban design projects

Sydney is Australia’s leading finance and business centre, as well as one of the world’s most liveable, welcoming and desirable cities. The City of Sydney plays an active role in supporting and enhancing an innovative, dynamic and prosperous economy. This will be reinforced by commissioning major iconic artworks of international standing as part of major Sustainable Sydney 2030 projects and other key infrastructure developments. (Such as Sydney Light Rail and the creation of Green Square Town Centre).

### 2. Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal stories and heritage in public spaces

Sydney is a multicultural society, and the Indigenous cultures of Australia are the oldest continuous cultures in the world. The City of Sydney recognises the importance of acknowledging the first people of this land, and of the historic and contemporary significance of the Eora Journey project. This significant project, envisioned in Sustainable Sydney 2030, will be developed as part of the implementation of the Public Art Strategy. Commissioning works by contemporary and traditional

Aboriginal artists will foster awareness in the local community of a history and histories of the local land and its original peoples.

### **3. Support local artists and activate city places through temporary art projects**

Temporary projects and events create an ongoing dialogue about society and public space and allows the City to respond flexibly to the innovations of artists in defining and re-defining the physical nature of the City and its impact on our sensibilities. Artists working with new media extend available technologies to comment on and understand the implications of a globalised, networked and rapidly changing society. The City recognises that supporting playful, thoughtful and ephemeral temporary art projects is a valuable way of questioning and understanding our society.

### **4. Support vibrant places in Village Centres with community art and City Art projects**

The City recognises that the opportunity to participate in the conceptualising or making of art is an empowering method of engagement. Commissioning community artworks in appropriate locations can be a step towards healing communities, give a voice to children and young people, and it can present a new way of engaging with the urban experience.

The City of Sydney is also committed to a multi-million dollar capital works program which will consolidate and update existing parks, streets and facilities as well as create new parks and community, cultural or recreation facilities in Village Centres as outlined in Sustainable Sydney 2030. A range of public art projects which enhance and celebrate the distinct characteristics of the City's Village Centres and cultural precincts and contribute to the identity of each place will be commissioned.

### **5. Promote high quality public art in private development**

The provision of public artworks in private developments significantly contributes to the experience of individual architectural projects and urban form and therefore the cultural richness of the city. The City of Sydney requires that developers commission and install appropriate permanent artworks in private developments where there is significant publicly accessible space. In order to facilitate this, the City of Sydney publishes Public Art in Private Development Guidelines.

### **6. Support stakeholder and government partners to facilitate public art opportunities**

Working with key City stakeholders, as part of the Sustainable Sydney 2030 direction for more effective governance processes, will maintain a vital and financially viable public art program. The City will facilitate a range of partnerships in order to realise opportunities for more artworks and programs that are relevant and timely for a cultural and creative City.

### **7. Manage and maintain the City's collection of permanent art works, monuments and memorials**

The City will continue an ongoing collection management system to maintain and assess works in its collection involving conservation and refurbishment of many historical items on a carefully monitored basis. The City will document and catalogue the collection to enable identification, informed management decisions and the provision of information to the public. The Public Art Collection will, as far as funding allows, be structured and administered in accordance with musicological standards and codes of conduct.

## 8. Initiate and implement programs to communicate, educate and engage the public about City Art

The City of Sydney recognises the importance of encouraging appreciation and understanding of art. Artworks can be enjoyed for their aesthetic qualities but are also important for their ability to provide wider and more complex pictures of the society from which they emanate. Public art plays an important role in place-making and as such can identify, comment on, and create memorable communities. The Public Art Collection provides a picture of the Sydney's history and civic interests in a particularly distinctive and accessible manner.

The City of Sydney City Art website fosters awareness of the Public Art Collection as a unique collection of cultural heritage items. It will illustrate best practice in public art and provide access to the City's latest public art policy, strategy and various public art guidelines. Social media opportunities will also provide a dialogue with the public and further encourage appreciation and educate people of the importance and role of contemporary public art in the urban environment. Other mechanisms to ensure all City Art is accessible and communicated will also be investigated.

### GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC ART

Evaluation and approval of all public artworks proposed by the City of Sydney, other public authorities, individuals and other groups in the City of Sydney local government area will be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the objectives and actions of Sustainable Sydney 2030, the City Art Public Art Strategy, Acquisition and Deaccession Guidelines, Public Art in Private Development Guidelines and the principles of this Public Art Policy;
- Standards of excellence and innovation;
- The integrity of the work;
- Relevance and appropriateness of the work to the context of its site;
- Consistency with current planning, heritage and environmental policies;
- Plans of Management;
- Consideration of public safety and the public's access to and use of the public domain;
- Consideration of maintenance and durability requirements;
- Evidence of funding source and satisfactory budget including an allocation for ongoing maintenance;
- Non-duplication of monuments commemorating the same or similar events; and
- Consideration for a holistic approach to public art in the City.

## Responsibilities

The Public Art Policy and Public Art Strategy will be monitored and implemented by the City Design Unit with the support of Development Assessment, City Research Strategy & Corporate Planning and City Projects Divisions.

The City Design Unit will determine the strategic basis for and define the need and develop briefs for public art projects.

City Projects Unit will generally be responsible for the delivery of public art and operational aspects of the program that are part of the Capital Works Program.

City Design Director with the input from the City Projects Design Unit will work together to coordinate the Public Art Advisory Panel who will oversee the Public Art Program and provide independent advice.

Recommendations from the Public Art Advisory Panel on the development of public art projects and the selection of curators and artists, will be approved by the CEO (or delegate), or Council as required under statutory requirements.

The City Design Director supported by the City Design Unit and City Projects will provide advice from the Public Art Advisory Panel to the Development Assessment Unit for applicants.

## Intended Outcomes

The Public Art Policy and Public Art Strategy will support a range of objectives of the City of Sydney including:

- The implementation of Sustainable Sydney 2030.
- The integration of art into the fabric of the city in ways that will reflect, respond and give meaning to Sydney's unique environment, history and culturally diverse society.
- A commitment to excellence, innovation and diversity in keeping with the aesthetic and cultural significance of the city's public domain and with the dynamic and experimental nature of contemporary art practice.
- Assist developers, art consultants, artists, architects, landscape architects and project managers in the provision of public art in private developments.
- Nurturing the city as a creative environment in which opportunities for artists and their role in the community can flourish and expand.
- Encouragement of a greater contribution by artists to the design and development of the public domain by implementing collaborations between artists, architects, landscape architects, urban designers and planners in relevant Council capital works projects.
- Involvement of Sydney's diverse communities in the creative planning process to encourage civic pride and developing the distinct local character of the city's villages.
- Increased understanding and enjoyment of public art and an awareness and appreciation of the significant benefits provided by a rich and diverse artistic environment.
- Providing a sustainable framework for the care and conservation of the City's unique cultural heritage.
- Support/direct any temporary public art projects in accordance with the Public Art Strategy.

**Evaluation**

The Public Art Policy and Public Art Strategy will be closely monitored by the City Design Unit and form the key guiding documents for the implementation of Public Art across the City of Sydney.

An evaluation of the Public Art Policy and Public Art Strategy will be informed by an overall improvement in the quality of public art and how well the principles for the delivery of public art outlined in this policy have been adhered to.

The Public Art Strategy also includes key measures of success for each principle that will also be applied in determining the success of the Public Art Policy and Public Art Strategy.

**Consultation**

**References**

<b>Laws and standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Act 1993</li> </ul>
<b>Policies, procedures and guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Art – Public Art Policy, Public Art Strategy and Acquisitions and Deaccessions Guidelines for Public Art 2011</li> <li>Sustainable Sydney 2030</li> </ul>

**Approval**

Council approved this policy on 16 May 2011.

The policy was reviewed by City Design Unit Director and Public Art Advisory Panel and determined to be fit for purpose. Council was advised of this on 22 January 2016.

**Review**

Review period	Next review date	TRIM reference
The City Design Unit Director and Public Art Advisory Panel will review this policy every four years.	June, 2019	2015/173121-01