



**muswellbrook
shire council**

Public Art Policy

Policy No P30/1

Table of Contents

Policy Objective.....	3
Policy Statement	3
Enhancing Public Art.....	4
Funding Sources	4
Identification of Priority Locations.....	4
Sustainability and Public Artworks	5
Register of Public Artworks	5
Donations of Public Artworks	5
Community Initiated and Social Engagement Public Art Projects.....	5
Community Participation and Engagement Process.....	5
Marketing and Promotion	5
Restoration of Artworks	6
Relocation of Artworks.....	6
Disposal of Public Artworks.....	6
Legislation	6
Associated Council Documentation	6
Authorisation Details	6
Details History	7

Policy Objective

The objective of the Muswellbrook Shire Council Public Art Policy is to support the implementation of Council's 2017-21 Delivery Program objectives to promote participation in cultural activities, to improve the liveability of the Shire's communities and continue with the implementation of projects to support the revitalisation of the town centres of the Muswellbrook Shire, which includes a target to install permanent exhibitions of public art.

Policy Statement

In planning for and commissioning public artworks, Council adopts the following principles:

1. Public artworks should contribute to the Shire's cultural identity and create a sense of place:
 - Artworks should be appropriate to the local community in which they are to be sited.
2. Public artworks should help to build stronger, more connected communities within the Muswellbrook Shire:
 - Public art should improve the amenity of public places and promote opportunities for social interaction
 - Community involvement should be encouraged in the development of public art projects.
3. Public artworks should be able to be enjoyed and experienced by people of different ages and backgrounds:
 - Neighbourhood art projects should be developed with a community audience in mind.
 - Public artworks should engage and involve people of different ages, including young people, and provide an opportunity to explore cultural diversity.
4. Public artworks should be sensitive to the area's cultural heritage:
 - Projects should respond to the social history of the Upper Hunter region.
5. Public artworks should relate well to the built and natural environment:
 - Council should encourage collaboration with architecture and design teams on capital works projects.
 - Ensure that public artworks are responsive to climate and environmental issues.
6. Public artworks should exemplify artistic excellence and integrity:
 - Encourage works that are original and showcase excellence in Australian art and design.
 - The integrity of artists must be respected in the way the work is treated and represented by Council.
7. Public artworks should respond to the challenge of climate change through sustainable design and fabrication:
 - Artworks must be constructed using sustainable materials and processes.

- Water features must only use recycled or rainwater.
8. Public artworks must consider public safety and easily maintained:
- Artworks must be designed to be structurally sound under a range of uses and conditions.
 - Permanent artworks must be designed to be durable and able to be maintained at minimal cost.

Enhancing Public Art

Funding Sources

Muswellbrook Shire Council aims to either acquire or commission and complete, at minimum, one public artwork each financial year over five years. Council recognises that best practice Public Art projects can only be achieved through the allocation of adequate budgets. Council will consider public art opportunities as part of its annual budget review process.

In this regard, Council's financial contribution to public art will be through one of two methods:

- a. infrastructure projects with a component of built-in artwork, funded under Council's annual capital works program.
- b. specific budget allocation for iconic/stand-alone artwork.

Every year, in developing the new financial year's draft capital works program, Council staff will review its building program and nominate projects which offer the best opportunities to integrate public art. Examples of infrastructure projects with a built-in art component are artist-designed alternative paving treatment, colour selection, facade treatment to buildings, fencing or new street furniture.

Nominated projects will be costed and submitted for Council's endorsement as part of its Operational Plan and Budget process. This process requires Council's staff to consider in advance how public art may be assimilated within the design and delivery process of public facilities improvement works. On occasions, Council may consider it appropriate to allocate a special budget to acquire or commission a piece of stand-alone or iconic public artwork. Guidelines for the commissioning of new public art works are described in Attachment 1 of this document.

In appropriate circumstances, Council will enter into a voluntary planning agreement with developers in addition to S94 requirements. The type of public artwork will depend on the nature of the development proposal and opportunities present at the development site and its surrounds. A nationally accepted guide of 1.0% of construction costs will be used as a starting point for negotiations on voluntary planning agreements.

In addition, Council may obtain grant funding from an arts institution/ agency or receive sponsorship from a philanthropic/ corporate organisation. Community groups may also propose public art funded by another source and seek to form a partnership with Council.

Identification of Priority Locations

A multi-disciplinary team including Council officers from the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre and Community Infrastructure teams will identify suitable sites within the Shire where public art should be encouraged. This team will work together to ensure that each piece of public art meets the criteria of the public art procedures.

Sustainability and Public Artworks

Council has a commitment to implementing ecologically sustainable practices as part or all of its facilities and activities including the planning, design, and implementation of all outdoor public art projects. This includes the use of renewable (green) materials and technologies in artists' designs, fabrication and installation processes. Council will also seek to acquire artworks that are appropriate to the environment in which they are to be installed e.g. outdoor artworks should be highly durable, resistant to vandalism and require low maintenance.

Register of Public Artworks

All public artworks will be identified on Council's asset register including for each item, a description of the artwork, maintenance requirements and maintenance budgets along with decommissioning details.

Donations of Public Artworks

From time to time, artists and members of the community offer to donate artworks to Council with the expectation that the works will be cared for and suitably displayed in the public domain/Council premises. Only artwork created by professional artists, or a professional working as a part of a multi-disciplinary team, will be accepted by Council. All public art accepted by Council will be on the basis of an agreed timeframe. This timeframe may be reviewed at any time during the originally agreed life cycle should Council have concerns regarding the condition of the artwork or safety aspects.

All permanent donations will be accompanied by a legal document transferring full rights of ownership to Muswellbrook Shire Council. Council will have exclusive copyright licence of the works, however full copyright will remain with the artist/author of the work/object.

Community Initiated and Social Engagement Public Art Projects

Community initiated art refers to any proposal by an individual, community group or other external party to create and or fund a piece of public art. Social engagement projects targeted at hard to reach groups who would benefit from direct involvement would also be supported. These proposals must be supervised by a project coordinator (professional artist or experienced community development officer or both) to ensure access and equity outcomes and facilitate project outcomes.

Funding or sponsorship for these projects may be approved through Council's Cultural Community Grants Program or the biennial public art budget, as outlined in section 8.1 regarding funding sources.

Community Participation and Engagement Process

Where practicable, and in circumstances when timing is not an issue, the opinion of Council's Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel will be sought before Council commissions or accepts a donation of public artwork. All donated artwork will be added to the asset register and maintained in accordance with Council's commissioning and decommissioning guidelines.

Marketing and Promotion

Any new public artwork for Muswellbrook Shire should have a marketing and communication strategy developed to ensure the best climate in which an artwork can be understood and received. Marketing and

promotion are also about advocacy for public art and developing the public's understanding of contemporary arts practice.

Restoration of Artworks

Public artwork including monuments, sculptures and water features in the public domain are subject to wear and tear and degradation over time. In addition, they are occasionally vandalised, graffitied or broken. As part of the acquisition of any new artwork, the artist must provide a maintenance schedule upon completion of the work. The schedule should outline requirements for regular cleaning, maintenance or servicing, specifically what is required, who should do it and how often e.g. cleaning agents for surface treatments and materials. Details of any spare parts that have been lodged must also be provided.

Relocation of Artworks

Circumstances sometimes arise where redevelopment of a site or changed uses render an artwork inappropriate and require its relocation. The implications if it is deemed necessary to relocate a work of art prior to the agreed display date needs consideration. Council must consult with the artist before preparing a report addressing the following matters: insurance, risk assessment, valuation, engineering and legal.

Disposal of Public Artworks

Disposal of public art must be done with the knowledge and in consultation with the artist, where possible. If, after making reasonable enquiries Council cannot identify or locate the artist (or the artist's representative), then Council may dispose of the public artwork as it sees fit. All decisions and actions should be fully documented. Artworks should first be offered for sale at a price based on independent valuation; first to the artist, then to other institutions or the public, or at an auction. Funds from any decommissioned public artwork should be reused for new/or upgraded public art within the City. Objects which are destroyed should be disposed of in a responsible manner

Legislation

Nil

Associated Council Documentation

Public Art Procedures 2011

Public Art Policy 2009

Authorisation Details

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