

TAMWORTH REGION PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

2024/25-2028/29



Tamworth Regional Council acknowledges the Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi people, who are the Traditional Custodians of this land. In presenting this Strategy, we would like to pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in and visiting our region.



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"Public art is art in any medium that has been planned and executed with the intention of being staged in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all."

Definition of Public Art



Introduction and Summary

Tamworth Regional Council is committed to supporting and developing public art throughout our Local Government Area (LGA).

The term 'public art' refers to creative and **original artworks** created for, or located in, public spaces or facilities, such as parks, foreshores, squares, or spaces within a public building, or placed in any space accessible by the general community, including private sites that impact on the public domain.

Public art is a part of our **public history**, our **evolving culture** and our **collective memory**. It reflects and reveals the ideas and values of our society and **adds meaning** to our towns and cities. In creating public art, artists respond to our times and the outside world in a way that both reflects their inner vision and chronicles our public experience.

Why is public art important?

It can **tell stories** and histories and connect people to place.

It can create orientating **landmarks and places** where people want to gather.

It can create **identity** and a sense of pride.

It can **express ideas** or emotions that create a response and discussion.



*"What distinguishes public art is its unique associations with how it is made, where it is placed and what it means. Public art can **express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness and question our assumptions.** Placed in public sites, this art is intended for everyone, a form of collective community expression. Public art is a reflection of how we see the world – the artist's response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are.'*

– Association of Public Art

Tamworth Regional Council's Public Art Policy, demonstrates its commitment to guiding decision making on public art in the region. Under the policy, Council will invest annually in a Public Art Fund to be used for the development of new public art.



COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC ART

The following identified commitments have been used as guiding principles in developing the Public Art Engagement Strategy and are incorporated in its aims and actions.

- Council will **invest annually in a Public Art Fund** that will be used from time to time to commission new works, including leveraging additional grant monies or public/private partnership funding.
 - Council will **consciously plan public art** in the region's public places, in consultation with community and key stakeholders, so that it is fully integrated into available spaces in a way that optimises the space, the work and overall community appreciation of the resulting experience.
 - Council will consider a **mix of professionally commissioned art and community art**, including 'artist with community' projects. In most cases, Council will publicly advertise for expressions of interest from prospective artists.
 - Council has aspirations to see **contemporary artworks** developed that celebrate the region's heritage (including electricity/light, Aboriginal and cultural heritage), promote the region's brand ('Capital of Country') and embrace diversity.
 - Council will ensure that the opportunity to enjoy public art of both a **permanent and temporary nature** is available **across the region**, but especially in the highly public areas in the city, towns and villages.
 - Council will seek to **recognise and value local artists**, including local Aboriginal artists, when commissioning new works.
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- Council will **seek advice from the Tamworth Regional Arts Advisory Committee (TRAAC)** before commissioning, selecting and/or locating any new public artworks.
 - Council will **discourage signage and advertising that compromises public art** and the integrity of the space in which it is located in the main streets, public parks and gardens, and major venues across the region's city, towns and villages.
 - Council will **develop a set of guidelines to support the inception, coordination, installation, procedures, maintenance and ongoing management** of public art across the region. Council will also develop a guideline for considering gifts of public art.

Public Art Strategy

The Public Art Strategy (the Strategy) is to be utilised by Council to govern a highly professional and well-managed process for the inception, coordination, installation, maintenance and ongoing management of public art in the Tamworth Regional Council LGA.

Excellent art in public places has the capacity to add layers of meaning, content, commentary and humour to streets, parkland and other public places for the enjoyment of community members and visitors.

Public art may cover a wide range of art forms and mediums, including (among others) sculptures, monuments, murals, fountains and water features, street furniture or bollards, projections and lighting treatments, paving, kinetic works, new media art, and landscaping or planting treatments.

Daily experience by residents and visitors of the results of creative production by professional artists, craftspeople and designers/

makers collaborating on projects with community members is an essential part of a community's active and ongoing process of understanding who we are and what we believe as individuals and groups, and of placing ourselves in proper relation to each other. Carefully planned and visionary public art, integrated into selected public spaces throughout Council's regional area, can help to reinforce an active spirit of compassion, empathy and reaching out among individuals to include all within our communities.

Tamworth Regional Council endorses the need to continually educate ourselves and our community about cultural 'making' – its processes, origins, many forms and languages, and its thousands of years of history. Strong, potent contemporary art can have an important role in engaging, delighting, amusing and confronting every member of the community across all age groups.

Under the Strategy, public art is intended to be located in urban places in towns, as well as in the surrounding villages and open-country areas. It is hoped that the wide-ranging character of the works planned to be commissioned over time under the Public Art Policy and Strategy will remind residents and visitors of the value of disparate views, helping us to be accepting of the differences among people, of the complexity of the cultures represented in our community, and of the diverse ways of seeing the world.

Public art, due to its visibility in the public domain, symbolises Council's dedication to artistic expression and to improving the wellbeing of residents and the experience of visitors. Quality public art installations add value to the local economy by expanding and diversifying cultural tourism opportunities and by increasing employment and training opportunities for regional artists and craftspeople.



The Strategy links the commitments of the Policy to a program for implementation, including identified aims and actions associated with those commitments. The Strategy will refer to the public art collection as an 'outdoor gallery'. Through utilising the thinking associated with this term, we gain a better understanding of how the collection is an asset of Council and requires ongoing resources for development and maintenance.

1. STRATEGY AIMS

As part of the outdoor gallery, Council has identified a series of aims that support the existing collection and provide a way forward for the development of new public artworks.

The Strategy aims to create an outdoor gallery that can:

- **connect public art to place – to our region and identity;**
- **express Tamworth's image as a centre for quality and innovation;**
- **create engagement with public art that leads to community pride and increased cultural tourism;**
- **provide a focus for local narratives, history and storytelling;**
- **support opportunities for industry and commercial development; and**
- **integrate a public art methodology and processes across Council.**

Public art plays a critical role in place making. It helps to generate landmarks, and to articulate and tell – perhaps for the first time – the story of a place. Local stories associated with the region have the opportunity to be interpreted through public art. The Strategy assists to ensure that new public artworks address specific criteria and align with the strategy's aims, so that they fulfil community desires and are implemented according to best practice.



2. STRATEGY AND DEVELOPERS

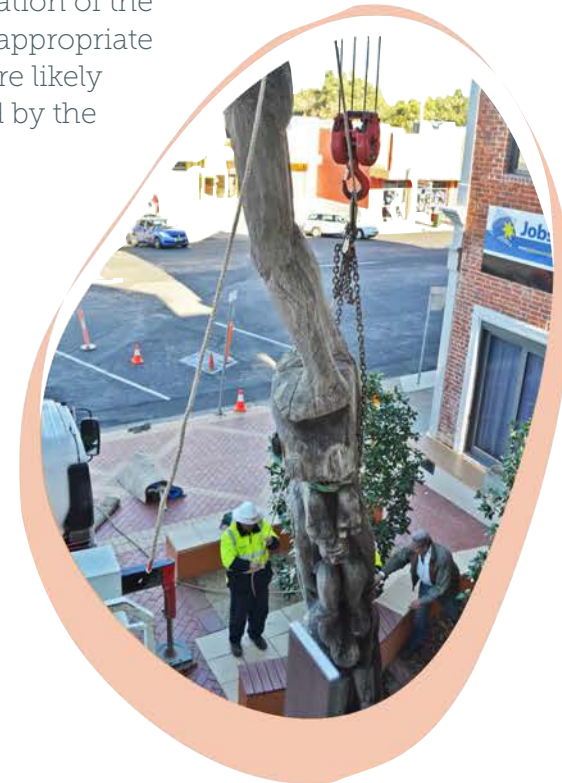
The success of urban design and developments is measured in the way people engage with, respond to and occupy public spaces. Tamworth Regional Council recognises that art in the public domain plays an important role in achieving this success, as well as **contributing to cultural and economic benefits** for both developers and the community. Public art adds to the community's sense of identity and contributes to a creative and vibrant community. For developers, public art provides a valuable point of difference for the development. Importantly, it can also provide engagement with and a sense of pride among the people who live, work or use the development.

Council requires developments located in the **Design Excellence Areas** (Central Business District and Bridge Street) to include public art.

Public art can be integrated into the building design or landscaping of a development to enhance the experience of the occupants and contribute to a sense of place. Such public art should be part of a **coherent expression of the built form**. It may be a sculpture in the foyer, a design treatment on the building exterior, or a lighting treatment,

but whatever form the art takes, it should have been created by a professional working artist and be visible from the public domain.

Innovative and contemporary public artworks are critical for enriching the visual and sensory experience of residents, workers and visitors to Tamworth. It is also important that the fabrication, installation and materials be of a high quality. Public artworks that display an **understanding of the site**, context and community and an appreciation of the locality and its appropriate themes are more likely to be embraced by the community.

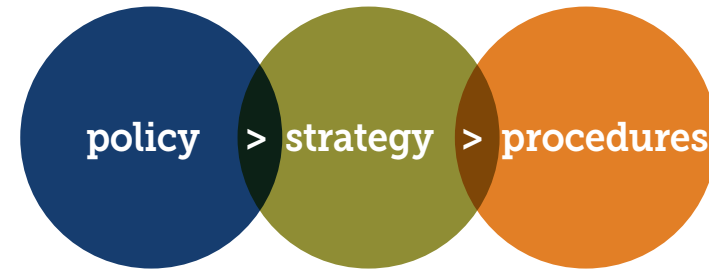


3. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Tamworth Regional Council will consider a diverse range of public projects, including temporary installations and collaborative projects. A range of project modes allows for innovation and offers as wide a range of practitioners as possible the opportunity to work in the public domain.

Council will ensure that the project brief is not overly limiting or prescriptive. The virtue of employing creative practitioners is the opportunity it provides to tap into their creativity and ingenuity in generating exciting contemporary concepts, as well as to appreciate their excellence in making artworks. Rather than narrowly dictating style and subject matter, it is better practice to carefully detail the parameters for the work (such as size, location, budget, audience, philosophy and function) and then to give practitioners free rein to interpret the brief from within those constraints. However, if a project is for a specific type of work, such as a portrait head or a statue, or has certain requirements regarding size, material, technique or subject matter, then encouraging maximum freedom may not be in the commissioner's interest.

It is important to be realistic in regards to expectations for a project and to match those expectations to the budget and the most appropriate type of project. For example, public art projects may be seen as a means of solving design problems, managing the use of public space, facilitating urban regeneration and development, or reducing community tension, to which they can usually only make a partial contribution.



The future success of the public art program requires a holistic approach and ownership throughout all of Council. The procedures and implementation processes are discussed later in this Strategy. Council has developed specialised procedures for public art commissions, public art donations, bequests cultural gifts and purchases, and public art loans. These procedures ensure that checks and balances are in place to implement risk management techniques and to generate the best possible outcomes for all involved. Some public art projects, such as 3D commissions, will require detailed assistance from Council engineers and town planners. Other projects, such as street art or murals, will involve our community safety officers, while ephemeral public art and/or loans will require support from Council's events team. Furthermore, there is a need not only to consider the public artwork in its development stages but also its expected life and any maintenance requirements.



Consultation and Research

As part of the development of the Strategy, Council engaged the community in a dialogue regarding public art and sought their ideas for public art in the LGA.

The success of many public art projects comes from community involvement, because participation signifies ownership. Many public art projects can provide an opportunity for community members to be involved at varying levels of inclusion and to contribute to the public art outcomes.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

During the draft Public Art Policy exhibition period and combined Cultural Plan consultations, Council used multiple tools for both virtual and physical engagement throughout the Tamworth Regional Council LGA. These included:

- public meetings and workshops;
- pop-up information sessions and attendance at public art events, (including Fitzroy Street Next Gen and Skywhales); and
- QR codes, website information and social media posts.

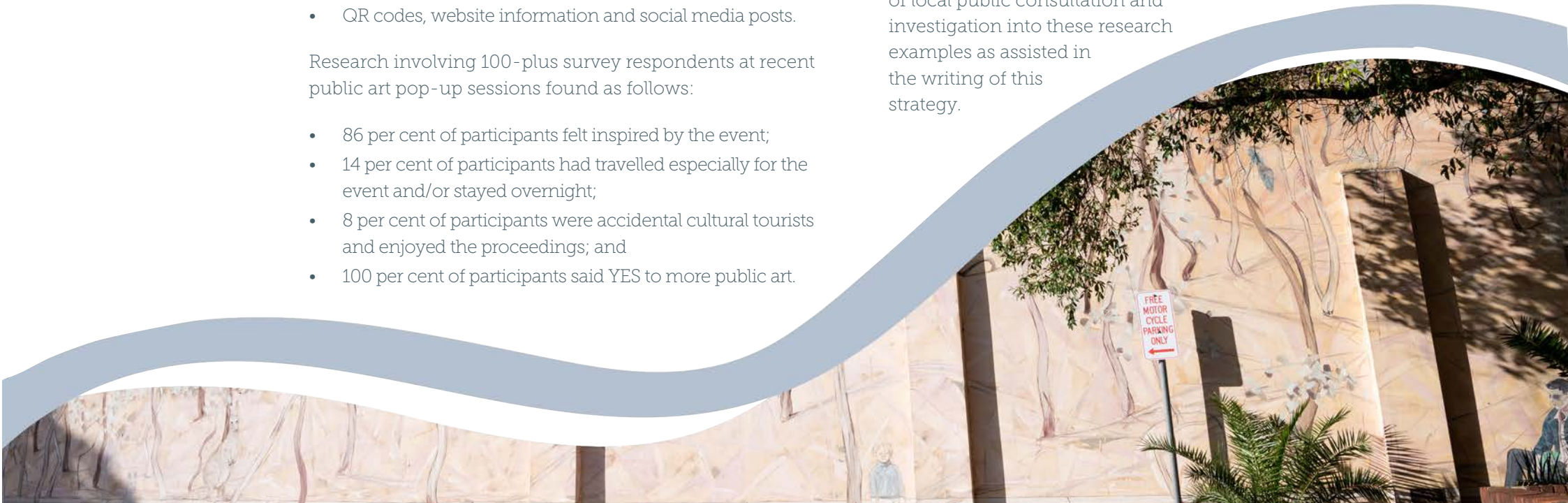
Research involving 100-plus survey respondents at recent public art pop-up sessions found as follows:

- 86 per cent of participants felt inspired by the event;
- 14 per cent of participants had travelled especially for the event and/or stayed overnight;
- 8 per cent of participants were accidental cultural tourists and enjoyed the proceedings; and
- 100 per cent of participants said YES to more public art.

In addition, Tamworth Regional Council has:

- worked in partnership with Arts North West to ensure community inclusion and avoid duplication, especially in relation to the community consultation sessions throughout the region;
- undertaken to map all public art examples, monuments, murals and memorials throughout the LGA, and to update this database annually; and
- completed a needs analysis, identifying the gaps in the public art collection in terms of its themes, styles and artist representation.

Information compiled through the public art mapping process, collection analysis and consultation with the community has been collated into the Public Art Strategy. This methodology has encouraged community engagement. Furthermore, research into other local government areas and their public art policies and strategies has helped provide relevant examples. The combination of local public consultation and investigation into these research examples as assisted in the writing of this strategy.





Existing Public Art and Themes

UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC ART COLLECTION AND OUTDOOR GALLERY

Before we start to plan for and commission new public artworks, we need to have a thorough understanding of the existing outdoor gallery collection. How can these works be interpreted? What are their identified theme/s? What significance do they have for the local community? What have we previously generated? What are the 'gaps' in the public art collection?

Tamworth Regional Council has identified 164 monuments, memorials and public artworks in the LGA. The majority of these are monuments and memorials commemorating people, groups and events. However, for the purpose of this new strategy, the memorials and plaques will be removed from the public art collection, as they cannot be specifically defined as 'a work of art' that has been generated by an 'artist'. Monuments and memorials that are not public art will still be cared for and maintained by Council, but under a different system.

Over the past few years, as part of the previous Public Art Engagement Strategy 2016–2021, Council has developed several examples of contemporary and modern public art. This has been particularly evident as part of the Peel River Public Art Trail, where works such as Peter Hooper's Picasso Guitar, James Rogers' Riverbend and Amy Hammond's Dhinawangu Walaaybaa (Emu Nest) have all added to the outdoor gallery. We have also been able to secure contemporary public art through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, including Steven King's Stargazer III and Tamworth's iconic large-scale Golden Guitar, which was not previously owned by Council. These new additions to the outdoor gallery have played a key role in diversifying the public artworks within the LGA; however, contemporary public art is still an underdeveloped area.



"Audiences of all ages love Tanya Bartlett's statues of Smoky and Dot Dawson and Slim Dusty."





to make a personal statement about the society they live in. The form has moved from its beginnings as graffiti and vandalism to new modes where the work conveys messages to passersby or simply invites them to enjoy a thing of beauty.

Laneway art boasts its own distinctive visual aesthetic. Laneways may encompass everything from murals, overhead lighting and soundscapes, to animations and projection experiences. Outdoor furniture, shade cloths and greenery provide more and better open spaces for casual dining in laneways, improving their walkability and connectivity, enabling day and night activity, and increasing footfalls. Laneway art can also trial temporary interventions and pop-up activations, with a view to introducing more permanent changes in the future.

Prior to this period, public artworks have tended to be traditional items, such as bronze sculptures and murals. As these works are still very popular among residents and tourists, Council has continued to develop them as well as contemporary pieces, such as Tanya Bartlett's new statue of John Williamson in Peel Street and the relocation of the bronze busts of country music singers and songwriters in Bicentennial Park.

Murals have always been popular public art outcomes in the past, but their quality and execution have varied. More recent examples, such as the Barraba Silo's mural by Fintan Magee (*The Water Diviner*) or Scott Nagy and Janne Birkner's *Bedtime Story* mural, demonstrate the quality of public art murals that can be achieved when working in partnership.

Street art is a growing form of public art where visual artworks are created in public locations for public visibility. It has been associated with the terms 'independent art', 'post-graffiti', 'neo-graffiti' and 'guerrilla art'. Today, street art is a form of artwork that is displayed in public on buildings, streets, trains and other publicly viewed surfaces. Many 'guerrilla' artworks are intended by the artist

The areas below list the details of the nature of the existing collection (2016/2023). It consists of:

- 29/34** monuments and statues
- 46/48** memorials and plaques Note - these are no longer identified as 'public art,art', as they were not generated by an artist
- 17/19** landscaping works and items of street furniture
- 23/45** murals, street artworks and beautifications of service infrastructure
- 3/13** contemporary public artworks
- 1/5** projections, multi-media and ephemeral works

2. EXISTING THEMES WITHIN THE OUTDOOR GALLERY

The existing public art within the LGA not only consists of works in a range of styles and mediums, but also represents a number of themes. Tamworth Regional Council’s monuments and memorials are largely dedicated to major events (such as World Wars I and II) and country music performers.

The collection reflects the history of our city and the surrounding townships. It acknowledges the community’s contribution to the nation and its efforts in times of war. These works also explore and tell stories about local history, such as the gold rush era, or local production and industry. The outdoor gallery also portrays the valuable role of volunteers and service clubs, represented through a number of plaques and memorials.

The numbers of identified public artworks that relate to each theme are indicated below:

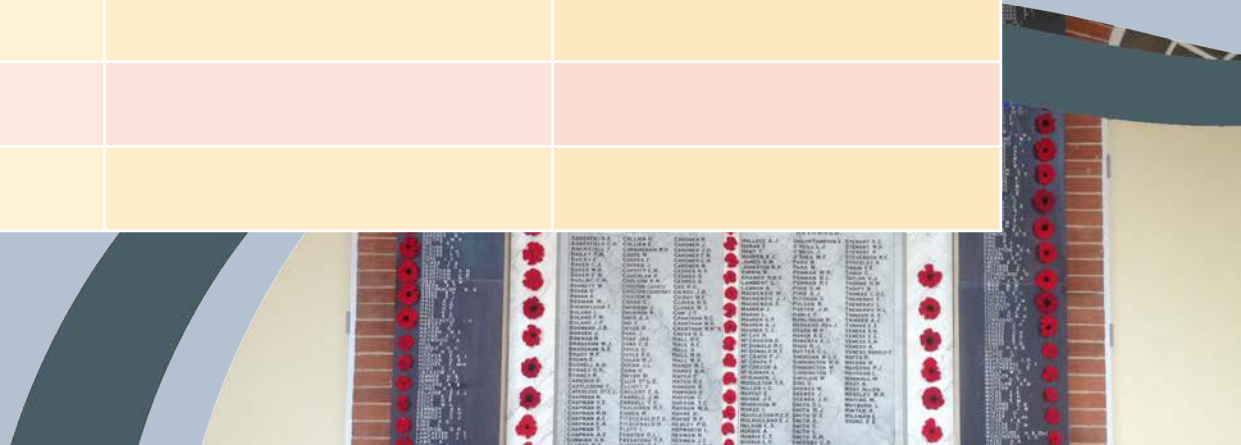
IDENTIFIED THEME	NUMBER 2015/16	NUMBER 2022/23
War and Service	26	26
Recognition	28	28
Country Music	9	20
City of Light	3	13
Indigenous	11	16
Local History	15	24
Young People	N/A	4
Multicultural	N/A	2
Natural Environment	N/A	4
Other	27	27



3. PRIORITY THEMES WITHIN THE OUTDOOR GALLERY

Through the process of mapping the existing outdoor gallery, we can identify the Council-owned public art throughout the LGA and note the gaps in the collection. Themes with low or no representation will need to be a priority for Council over the period of the Strategy. Existing themes with high or medium representation can be addressed in new mediums and styles to add diversity (for example, abstract country music sculptures).

IDENTIFIED THEME	LOW REPRESENTATION	MEDIUM REPRESENTATION	HIGH REPRESENTATION
War and Service			YES
Recognition			YES
Country Music			YES
Local History		YES	
City of Light		YES	
Indigenous		YES	
Young People	YES		
Multicultural	YES		
Natural Environment	YES		



1. CONNECT PUBLIC ART TO PLACE – TO OUR REGION AND IDENTITY

	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES	MEASURES
1	Generate all new permanent public artworks with a connection to our region and identity	Ongoing	Increased feelings of connection, captured via social media and feedback
2	Continue to develop public artworks for the Tamworth CBD area to assist with site activation and place making	Annually	Increased use of and engagement with public spaces
3	Implement a minimum of one public artwork each financial year in the region's outlying towns and villages	Annually	Implementation of public art in each township over a five-year cycle.
4	Reinforce cultural tourism and promote public art in the outlying towns within Tamworth Regional Council's LGA	Short term 2024/25– 2025/26	Increased levels of awareness, cultural tourism and overnight stays
5	Generate public art that creates landmarks and provides visual reference points	Ongoing	Use of public art as landmarks and for orientation
6	Utilise ephemeral public art and loans to support festivals, national celebrations and special events	Annually	Quality and use of ephemeral public art. Effective skills specialisation and partnership with Events team.
7	Use public engagement tools, such as social media and technology, to connect with the audience	Ongoing	Positive publicity and social media responses
8	Integrate contemporary and interesting public artworks to enliven city spaces and create a vibrant public realm	Annually	Increased cultural tourism and overnight stays



2. EXPRESS TAMWORTH'S IMAGE AS A CENTRE FOR QUALITY AND INNOVATION

	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES	MEASURES
1	Ensure a diversity of public art styles, mediums, themes and artist involvement across the LGA	Annually	Increased representation of collection gaps
2	Mentor local emerging artists, and increase professional experience and skills among mid-career artists in the region	Ongoing	Increased skills for local emerging artists
3	Increase examples of contemporary public art, including street art, street furniture, sculptures and installations	Ongoing	Number and quality of new contemporary public artworks generated
4	Utilise a diversity of interpretation and story boards as part of public art and/or supporting public art	Ongoing	Reduction of number of plaques used and increase in alternative interpretation
5	Engage specialists in the field and professionally commission public art	Ongoing	Number of specialists engaged to commission public art
6	Investigate public art loans on a temporary basis to support events, space activation and place making	Medium term 2025/26– 2026/27	Implementation of public art loans
7	Review and refresh commission management processes ensuring excellence of design standards	Medium term 2025/26– 2026/27	Generation and use of standard contracts and templates
8	Support the development and implementation of laneway and street art while monitoring quality control	Annually	Quality and quantity of laneway and street art projects



3. CREATE ENGAGEMENT WITH PUBLIC ART THAT LEADS TO COMMUNITY PRIDE AND INCREASED CULTURAL TOURISM

	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES	MEASURES
1	Generate opportunities for regional artists to design, develop and implement public art	Annually	Number of regional artists engaged
2	Utilise social media and other marketing tools to promote public art and to exchange information and ideas	Ongoing	Number of positive media responses and access to new ideas or ways of thinking
3	Design public art projects using new technology and interpretation methods such as soundscapes, lighting and projections and using various interpretation such as effective signage and QR codes	Ongoing	Quality of public art interpretation and use of new technology
4	Engage community in relevant public artworks to ensure mentoring and/or skills exchange for young people, Indigenous community, multicultural and access groups	Ongoing	Community engagement in projects, especially from minority groups
5	Provide opportunities for local artists, volunteers and students to participate in the public art projects when appropriate	Ongoing	Participation levels in public art projects
6	Explore funding opportunities to support the growth of creative industries, contributing to a robust local economy	Medium term 2025/26– 2026/27	Number of new creative industries. Sustainability of creative industries
7	Work in partnership with the Visitor Experience and Marketing and Communications teams to increase awareness and engagement	Ongoing	Increased engagement and participation in public art
8	Increase opportunities for cultural tourism and ongoing support for existing public art loans and attractions.	Annually	Public art loans implemented. Increased overnight stays and cultural tourism

4. PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR LOCAL NARRATIVES, HISTORY AND STORYTELLING

	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES	MEASURES
1	Utilise public art to tell stories that relate to our region's diverse local history and community	Ongoing	Interpretation of local stories and histories in public art
2	Continue to support the development of public artworks that relate to the 'Country Music' theme	Ongoing	New methods of interpreting the 'Country Music' theme
3	Support and expand the development of public artworks that relate to the 'City of Light' theme	Ongoing	New methods of interpreting the 'City of Light' theme
4	Generate new relevant, community-driven, quality, Aboriginal public artworks	Ongoing	Aboriginal community participation, procedures followed and quality of work
5	Support the outlying communities to develop public art that expands on existing projects and community partnerships	Annually	Increased collaboration with communities and partnerships
6	Utilise public art to tell stories that relate to our region's built and natural environments	Ongoing	Interpretation of natural and built history in public art
7	Establish a public art trail throughout the Victoria Park Precinct	Medium term 2025/26- 2026/27	Coordination with Victoria Park Masterplan
8	Continue the public art trail throughout Bicentennial Park and identify works for the Peel River loop	Medium term 2025/26- 2026/27	Coordination with Bicentennial Park Masterplan

5. SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES	MEASURES
1	Work in partnership with commercial development to identify public art in the planning stages and contribute to the public realm	Ongoing	Effective partnerships and collaborations with commercial developers
2	Actively seek sponsorship, cultural gifts and external grants to support the development of public art	Ongoing	Increase in external funding for and acquisitions of public art
3	Beautify existing service infrastructure to improve aesthetics and streetscapes	Ongoing	Increase in beautification of service infrastructure
4	Explore an incentives scheme for local businesses to encourage new public art on privately owned properties and to support their ongoing maintenance	Long term 2026/27 – 2027/28	Number and quality of new public artworks implemented. Maintenance of public art on privately owned premises
5	Incorporate a diversity of public art in town planning, CBD master planning and new residential zones	Long term 2026/27 – 2027/28	Public art projects included in master planning
6	Encourage collaboration of architects, landscape and urban designers, engineers, construction managers, builders, and other design and construction professionals	Long term 2026/27 – 2027/28	Effective partnerships and collaborations. Effective documentation and guidelines
7	Generate effective and accessible Public Art Guidelines for Developers	Medium term 2025/26 – 2026/27	Increased quantity and quality of public art outcomes from development
8	Investigate public art and the public realm in the review of the Development Contributions Scheme	Medium term 2025/26 – 2026/27	Increased public art revenue from development contributions

6. INTEGRATE A PUBLIC ART METHODOLOGY AND PROCESSES ACROSS COUNCIL

	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES	MEASURES
1	Capitalise on existing Council infrastructure projects and incorporate new public art as part of the site development	Ongoing	Implementation of public art with Council infrastructure
2	Link new public artworks to the Development Control Plan and to identified areas for increased housing density and population growth	Medium term 2025/26– 2026/27	Adopted DCP for public art located in identified precincts
3	Develop new public artworks that follow Council policy, procedures and processes to ensure transparency and quality control	Ongoing	Public Art Procedures updated. Level of transparency in Council processes
4	Seek advice from the Tamworth Regional Arts Advisory Committee before commissioning, selecting and/or locating any new public artworks	Ongoing	TRAAC informed and consulted for public artworks
5	Increase the Public Art Fund to reflect the increase in artist fees and building and production costs. Unspent funds to be allocated towards a Public Art Reserve	Short term 2024/25- 2025/26	Increased Public Art Fund
6	Develop a public art maintenance schedule with identified repairs and timeframes	Short term 2024/25- 2025/26	Public art maintenance schedule generated and implemented
7	Allocate adequate funds for the maintenance and restoration of existing public artworks owned by Council. Unspent funds to be allocated towards a Public Art Reserve	Short term 2024/25- 2025/26	Public art maintenance fund increased
8	Ensure public artworks are included in Council's current asset management plans and are adequately insured	Short term 2024/25- 2025/26	Public Art Asset Management Plan developed

Public Art Implementation and Procedures

This summary of the Tamworth Regional Council's implementation processes for public art covers the what, how and who of decision making on public art for our LGA.

Where does the funding arise for Tamworth Regional Council public art projects?

As part of its approval of the Public Art Policy, Council is committed to the provision of an annual Public Art Fund.

The Tamworth Regional Council's Public Art Fund, to which funding contributions can be made, is capable of holding funds across financial years. Except in those cases where the available funding is tied to a specific site, purpose or development, or an external grant, the Public Art Fund is utilised for public art projects without restriction to a particular site or project area.

Another integral part of Council's funding for public art is the Cultural Gifts Policy. From time to time, individual members of the community, businesses or corporations, sister cities, community groups, and other legally constituted organisations may formally offer to donate various items to Tamworth Regional Council, including such elements of heritage or cultural origins as works of art, monuments and memorials, street furniture and landscaping artworks.

The Cultural Gifts Donation program is an integral part of public art donations and establishes principles and procedures for the formal consideration of all offers of gifts to Tamworth Regional Council when contacted by potential donors or donor organisations.



Types of Public Art Implementation

The implementation of public art can occur in one of three ways:

- **public art commission;**
- **public art donation, cultural gifts program, bequest and/or purchase; and**
- **public art loan.**

Public art commissions are works that are commissioned by Council. These works can be of three types:

- **direct commission**, where Council approaches artist/s directly to invite them to produce an artwork, or the community suggests an artist to commission;
- **limited competition**, where more specific guidelines and advertising are used to source an artist; and
- **open competition**, where an expression of interest process is generally used and the competition is advertised widely. These commissions are usually site-specific, with a detailed brief, and can involve public artworks generated from developer contributions.

Public artworks that are donations, cultural gifts, bequests and/or purchases typically involve an external stakeholder with a potential public art acquisition contacting Council. The identified procedures depend on the type of acquisition, and may include discussion of the public artwork's permanent location within the LGA and direct liaison with the artist.

Public art loans are works of public art that are supplied or loaned to Council for a specific but limited period of time. Typically, a contract specifies the agreed terms of the loan, and support is often provided for installation and de-installation as part of the process of the artwork loan. Examples include the national tour of Patricia Piccinini's *Skywhales: Every heart sings* from the National Gallery of Australia, or *The Birds of Australia StoryBox* interactive digital display touring from the Australian Museum. Public art loans are typically ephemeral or temporary in nature and can often be delivered as part of a festival or event.



How will artists be commissioned under the Public Art Strategy?

Artists will be commissioned for site-specific design and fabrication of works of art only in those Council projects where an in-house or external design professional – an architect, landscape architect or urban designer – has also been engaged to undertake the design of the surrounding building or precinct.

The artist will work closely with the design professional and their team at all stages of the commissioning process to ensure that the work of art is integrated within the project's overall design.

A public art project coordinator (Gallery Director or nominated council staff member) will be engaged to oversee each artist's commissioning process.

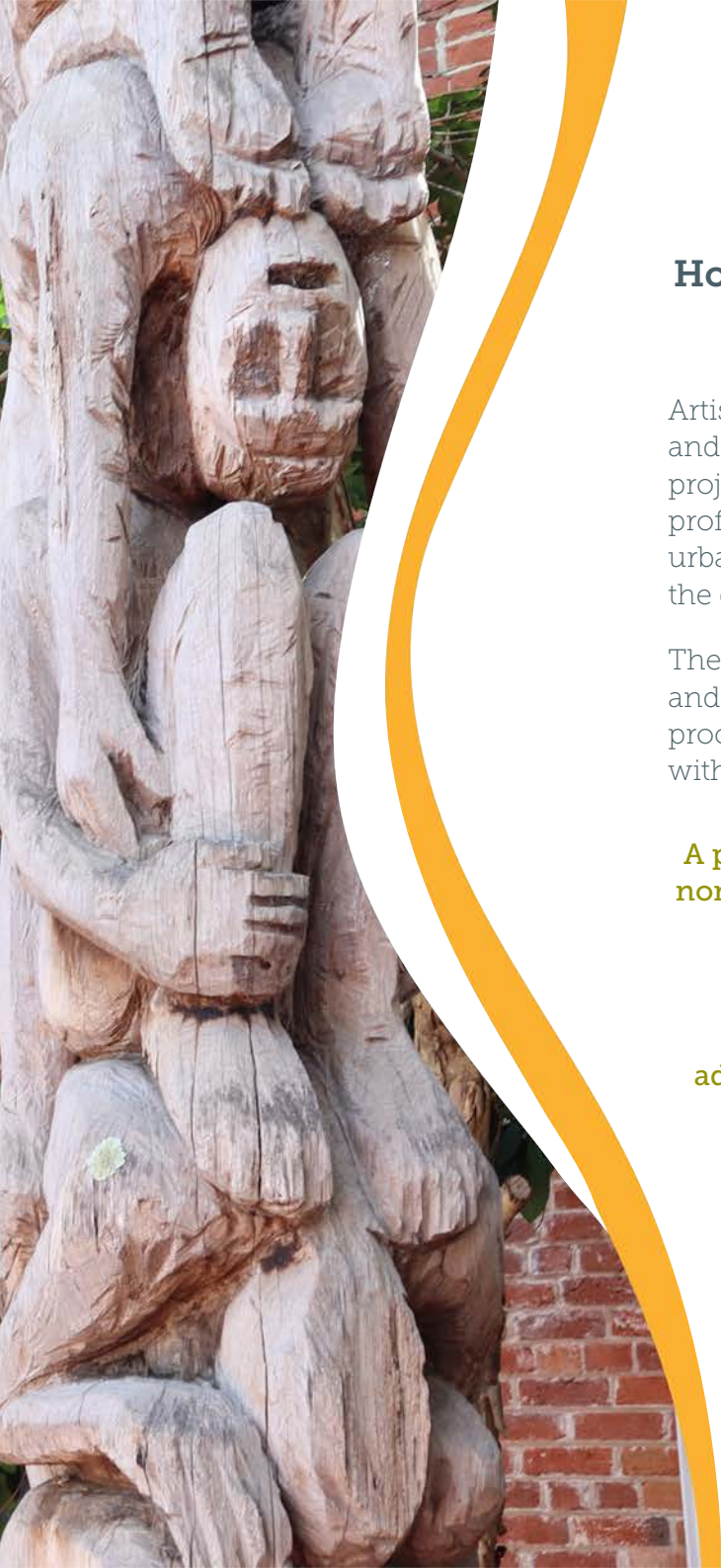
This will:

- ensure the availability of appropriate paid administrative and technical support to the artist;

and

- protect Council's interests through the utilisation of a coordinator experienced in risk management at each stage of the project

When commissioning public art that is to be integrated into the building design or landscaping as part of a coherent expression of the built form, the Public Art Plan and assessment of the public art proposal need to be prepared as part of the wider development application (DA) process and align with DA lodgement, referral, and assessment requirements and timeframes.



How are artists' commissions staged?

An artist undertaking a commission for a Council project is contracted for three phases of design and fabrication work:

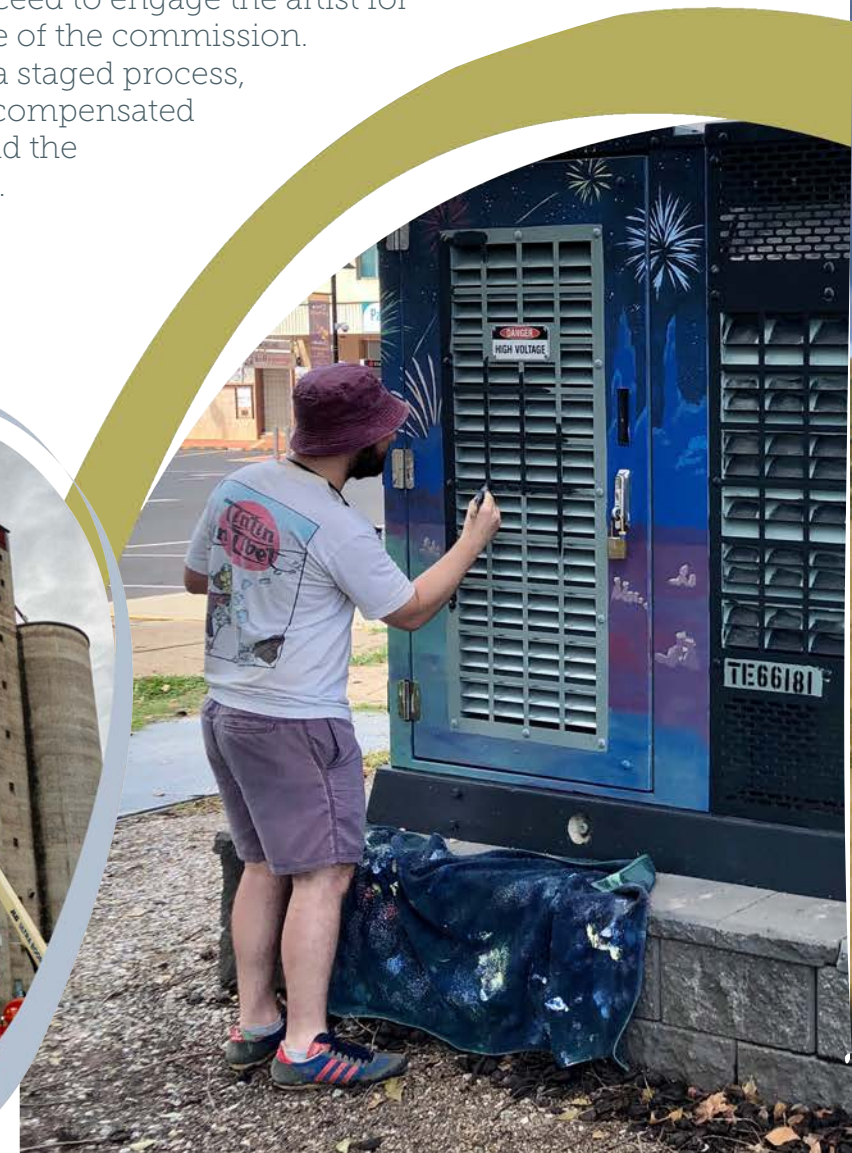
- 1. schematic design;**
- 2. design development; and**
- 3. fabrication/installation.**

These steps are similar to the schematic design, detailed design and construction phases of a building project. A contractual agreement between Council and the artist covers these three work phases.

Council's contractual agreement with the artist includes a detailed brief for each phase of the work. The brief covers the following:

- description and intent of the commission and its context within the capital works project or site for which public art is being commissioned;
- scope of work by the artist;
- 'deliverables' or submission requirements from the artist under that phase of the work;
- time program for completion of the phase; and
- the fee to be paid.

Council conducts an approval process at the end of the schematic design and design development phases of the artist's work. As part of the approval process, Council has the right to decide not to proceed to engage the artist for the next contracted phase of the commission. Since the artist is paid in a staged process, they will have been fully compensated for the work to date should the commission not proceed.



How are public art projects decided?

On an annual forward-planning basis, Council will decide which of its capital works projects will include public art. Council will seek advice from the Tamworth Regional Arts Advisory Committee before commissioning, selecting and/or locating any new public artworks.

New public artworks and acquisition proposals shall be assessed by a Selection Advisory Panel consisting of a minimum of three and a maximum of five of the following representatives:

- nominated Public Art Project coordinator;
- TRAAC representative;
- Tamworth Regional Gallery Director/Cultural Services Manager;
- relevant community representative, including Indigenous representation, young people, CALD, etc.;
- independent artist/curator – specialising in medium/genre of the work; and
- Arts North West representative.

The recommendations of the Panel will then be directed to the Director, Liveable Communities and/or Creative Communities and Experiences for their consideration and approval, following consultation with the General Manager. The Director, Liveable Communities and/or Creative Communities and Experiences can approve new public artworks acquisitions up to the value of \$100,000. All new acquisitions valued at over \$100,000 must be tabled at a Council meeting for approval.





Who is responsible for the care and maintenance of commissioned artworks?

Council accepts the inherent responsibility for maintaining each commissioned and acquired artwork, and its setting or surroundings, in a manner that:

- is consistent with the design intent of the work;
- does not significantly inhibit or alter the intended perception of the work by viewers; and
- is in accord with the pre-agreed instructions contained in the commissioned artist's maintenance recommendations for the work.

Council staff will prepare and develop an Asset Management Plan for Council's public artworks. The Asset Management Plan will involve valuing the public art collection annually and ensuring that appropriate insurance provisions are in place. Council will also ensure the public art maintenance schedule is updated each year with an estimation of and cost planning for public art cleaning and maintenance costs for the following year. The anticipated lifespan of the artwork will also be considered as part of the process of development and ongoing evaluation after artwork completion.

Council staff will prepare and develop an Asset Management Plan for Council's public artworks



How are public art projects reviewed?

The public consultation methods and review process for public art will be reviewed by TRAAC.

The rotating membership of TRAAC ensures that Council's public art commissioning processes are scrutinised at milestones throughout each commission by knowledgeable stakeholders with diverse expertise.

According to the terms of reference of TRAAC, one-third of the appointed members are reappointed each year for rotating three-year terms. This partial turnover of membership each year ensures a diversity of assessment and comment on public art commissions from year to year. At the same time, a continuity of strategic direction and understanding of the processes involved in the Public Art Policy and Engagement Strategy is maintained by the multi-year appointments of members.

The Tamworth Regional Council Public Art Policy and Strategy relates to and supports Council's planning policies and corporate documents in a consistent manner. These include:

- Tamworth Regional Blueprint 100;
- Blueprint 100 Our Community Plan 2023–2033;
- Blueprint 100 Our Delivery Plan, 2023–2025;
- Blueprint 100 Our Annual Plan and Budget;
- Blueprint 100 Our Resourcing Plan 2023–2034;
- Tamworth Region Council Cultural Plan;
- Victoria Park Master Plan;
- Bicentennial Park Master Plan;



Conclusion

Public Art Strategy Outcomes

The anticipated outcomes of the Strategy for the Tamworth LGA include:

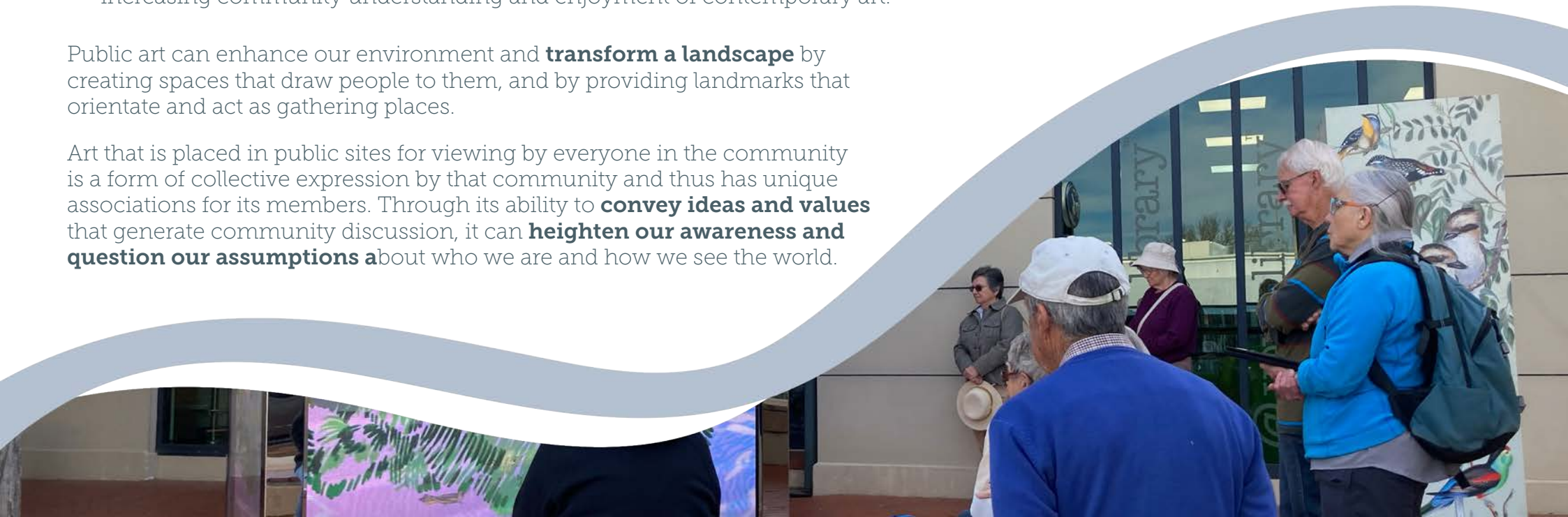
- ensuring that effective, meaningful and relevant community consultation is undertaken;
- identifying and planning for public art during the earliest stages of development/redevelopment projects;
- animating and enriching public spaces and contributing to urban regeneration;
- creating quality public spaces through innovative integration of art, design, landscape/architecture and related elements;
- creating landmarks in the urban and natural environment that will orientate and become natural gathering spaces;
- establishing art and artists as recognised assets of the city; and
- increasing community understanding and enjoyment of contemporary art.

Public art can enhance our environment and **transform a landscape** by creating spaces that draw people to them, and by providing landmarks that orientate and act as gathering places.

Art that is placed in public sites for viewing by everyone in the community is a form of collective expression by that community and thus has unique associations for its members. Through its ability to **convey ideas and values** that generate community discussion, it can **heighten our awareness and question our assumptions** about who we are and how we see the world.

'Public art is not an art "form". A work can be huge or tiny, or any size in-between. It can direct our gaze upward into the sky or to the paving beneath our feet. It can be abstract or realistic (or both), and it may be in any form – cast, carved, built, assembled or painted. It can be site-specific or stand in contrast to its surroundings.'

– Association of Public Art



Appendix

REFERENCES:

Albury City Public Art Policy
 Albury City Urban and Public Art Strategy
 Association of Public Art – What is Public Art?
 Brisbane City Council, Art in Public Places
 City of Melbourne, Plaques and Memorials Policy
 City of Melbourne, Public Art Melbourne
 City of Newcastle, Public Art and Placemaking
 City of Sydney, Public Art Policy & Strategy
 Collections Council of Australia, Significance 2.0, A guide to assess the significance of collections
 Direct quotes from community consultation
 Maitland City Council Public Art Policy
 National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), Public Art Commissioning
 Public Art: Linking Form, Function and Meaning, Elizabeth Umbanhowar
 Tamworth Regional Council Art Gallery Donations and Cultural Gifts
 Tamworth Regional Council Cultural Plan
 Tamworth Regional Council Fitzroy Street and Bicentennial Park Master Plan
 Tamworth Regional Council Public Art Policy, 2015
 Tamworth Regional Council Public Art Policy and Implementation Plan, 2008
 Tamworth Regional Council Regional Development Strategy
 Tamworth Regional Council Section 94 Plan
 Vivid Sydney

Image Credits – All images of public art included in this document have been taken by Tamworth Regional Council staff and contractors unless otherwise specified (*)

REFERENCES 2023:

Everyday Culture, October 2023, Committee for Sydney
 Maitland City Council Maitlanes Maitlanes | Maitland City Council (nsw.gov.au)
 Maitland City Council Place Activation Place Activation | Maitland City Council (nsw.gov.au)
 Maitland Public Art Policy 10.07-FINAL DRAFT-Public Arts Policy-JULY 2010-pub (nsw.gov.au)
 Public Art Guidelines for Developers – Woollahra Municipal Council
 National Association for the Visual Arts Introduction – [NAVA Code of Practice \(visualarts.net.au\)](https://visualarts.net.au)
 Arts Law Centre Australia website: Commission Brief from <https://www.artslaw.com.au/article/public-art-guidelines-for-artists-and-commissioners/>
 Arts Law centre Australia website: What to consider when creating an expression of interest Source: <https://www.artslaw.com.au/article/public-art-guidelines-for-artists-and-commissioners/>
 NSW Government Public Art Tool Kit [NSW Public Art Toolkit | NSW Government](https://www.nsw.gov.au/public-art-toolkit)
 NSW State Environment Planning Policy – [Subdivision 39 Sculptures and artworks State Environmental Planning Policy \(Exempt and Complying Development Codes\) 2008 - NSW Legislation](https://www.nsw.gov.au/state-environment-planning-policy)

